

THE TEXT IS FLY WITHIN THE BOOK ONLY

**This book is with
tight
Binding**

920 C59m

Keep Your Card in This Pocket

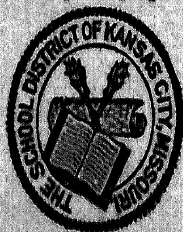
Books will be issued only on presentation of proper library cards.

Unless labeled otherwise, books may be retained for two weeks. Borrowers finding books marked, defaced or mutilated are expected to report same at library desk; otherwise the last borrower will be held responsible for all imperfections discovered.

The card holder is responsible for all books drawn on this card.

Penalty for over-due books 2c a day plus cost of notices.

Lost cards and change of residence must be reported promptly.



Public Library
Kansas City, Mo.

Keep Your Card in This Pocket

BERKOWITZ ENVELOPE CO., K. C., MO.

KANSAS CITY, MO. PUBLIC LIBRARY

0 0001 0445698 3

DATE DUE

JAN 18 '46

FEB 14 '46

JAN 2 '47

L 20 '45

28 '49

APR 10 '47

NOV 4 '64

DATE DUE

2835 5

36

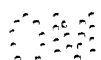
11-26

FE 18 '37 Q5

Mr 30 '38 23

Mr 1-39 55

GREAT
SHORT BIOGRAPHIES
OF MODERN TIMES

 *Uniform with This Volume.*

GREAT SHORT STORIES OF THE WORLD

An Anthology selected from the Literatures of all Periods and Countries, Edited with an introduction and notes by BARRETT H. CLARK *and* MAXIM LIEBER

The most complete one-volume anthology of short stories ever published. In its one hundred and seventy-seven stories it spans the entire range of literature, giving an unprecedented view of the great short fiction of all the world. In all, thirty-five literatures are represented, the stories drawn from the anonymous tale-spinners of ancient Egypt at one end, through the ancient and modern countries of Europe and Asia, down to such contemporary American writers as Anderson, Dreiser, Cather, and Cabell.

GREAT SHORT NOVELS OF THE WORLD

A Collection of Complete Tales chosen from the Literatures of all Periods and Countries, Edited with an introduction and notes by BARRETT H. CLARK

Included here are masterpieces from a score of literatures; novels familiar to the general reader, and others translated into English for the first time. Apuleius, Malory, Voltaire, Merimee, Pirandello, Turgency, Reymont, Björnson, James — the contents pages resound with famous names, while the less known but equally important literatures of ancient India, Arabia, Persia, China and Japan have been diligently conned in the search for suitable material.



B O N I B O O K S



GREAT SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF MODERN TIMES

THE SEVENTEENTH, EIGHTEENTH
AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES



*A Collection of Short Biographies, Literary
Portraits and Memoirs Chosen from the
Literatures of the Modern World*

BY

BARRETT H. CLARK



ALBERT & CHARLES BONI



GREAT SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF THE WORLD

COPYRIGHT, 1928, BY ROBERT M. MCBRIDE & CO.

*First issued in Bonibooks Series,
October, 1932*

979
6611



PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To

GAMALIEL BRADFORD

*who has added much
to the art of
biography*



Preface*

THE preparation of this book was a delightful adventure, which I was forced to bring to an end too soon: if it had not been for sober considerations of proportion, size, price, announced date of publication and the unreasonable demand of my publishers, I should at this moment be still in pursuit of more biographies. But even publishers are entitled to some consideration, and I have finally turned over to mine the MS of more than seven hundred thousand words, written by many hands, during a period of two thousand years.

During the past year and a half I have read some thousands of short biographies, and my wife has investigated almost as many for me. Together we have passed in review most of what seemed likely to prove suitable among the works written in English, French, and German, and a good part of what has been translated into those tongues from the Latin, Greek, Italian, and Spanish. I had at first intended to group my biographies according to a strict system of classification, according to countries, races, and periods. Such a system may have its uses, but I am inclined to think it misleading; for that reason I have adopted a very simple device, a convenience at most, to the reader who may wish to create his own background for the subject of any given biography.

Supposing I had attempted to subdivide my collection upon a basis of nationality? Should this be done by considering the author, or the subject? Where, for instance, should I have put Macaulay's *Frederick the Great*, under England, or under Germany? In the 18th, or in the 19th Century? Supposing I had solved this problem, would anyone be the gainer? The essay is a picture, description, history, interpretation, biography, of a man, set within the framework of his day and environment. If this is well done, is anything else very important?

I have brought together here what I call Short Biographies. Now, the short biography has not yet been so arbitrarily defined nor so closely analysed as the short story, let us say, or the drama. You may, if you like, subdivide all the biographies in this volume into as many types and species as you like, and call each by a separate name. There is no objection to classifying them as prefaces, essays, memoirs, reminiscences, sketches, poems, psychographs, portraits, or critical analyses. I have taken the word biography to mean something written about a person, and in selecting short biographies I have necessarily omitted books like Boswell's *Johnson*, Car-

* This preface was prepared for this and its companion volume, *Great Short Biographies of Ancient Times*.

lyle's *Cromwell*, and Lockhart's *Scott*. The short biography has at least one inestimable virtue: it is short. Though I don't entirely agree with Voltaire, there is something to be said of his contention that long biographies are often padded. He opens his little *Life of Molière* with the following words:

"The predilection of many readers for the frivolous, and the desire to make up a volume out of what ought to fill only a few pages, are the reasons why the biographies of celebrated men are nearly always ruined by the inclusion of useless details and popular fairy-tales, as false as they are insipid."

I am not prepared to argue in favour of Plutarch as against Boswell, but I confess that the *Life of Alexander* or of *Cato* has given me more pleasure than the *Life of Johnson*; Roper's *Sir Thomas More* is to me a more beautiful and, I feel, a truer picture of the man than Lockhart's *Scott* is of that writer's hero.

However, it is not my intention to plead in favour of one form as against another.

The ideal biography is a well-written story of a person's life, complete, true, and made by someone who knew him intimately. It contains everything that serves to throw light upon his character, his mind, his person, his work. It is written with passion, affection, imagination, understanding, yet without bias or personal prejudice. This is the sort of biography I have sought, but I have yet to find one that fulfilled all my requirements. Biographies appear to share the same imperfections as the subjects they treat of. When I began to gather material for this book I grew desperate on finding that some of my most readable lives were inexact and full of lies: it appears that nearly every biography written prior to the latest scientific study of it is "out of date," "one-sided," or "unreliable."

It was therefore necessary for me to give up trying to find the works of "reliable" biographers; of what use printing the very last word if that word were to be superceded by the last word of some scholar twenty years hence? Far better perpetuate the inexactitudes of Brantôme and Janin, Gozlan and Boccaccio than the less readable exactitudes of contemporary savants, since they will all be rejected in a few years?

Take, for instance, Brantôme's *Mary Queen of Scots* and Janin's *Deburau*. Both are full of personal bias; neither would be acceptable to the editor of a biographical dictionary. To rectify statements of alleged fact would require as many footnotes as there are paragraphs. Brantôme's biography is a beautiful document, call it what you will; it is possibly a fuller portrait of Brantôme than of the Queen he so pitied and loved. Janin's book is a tour de force, with some manufactured anecdotes and a very obvious intention to decry the fashionable theatres of the day. If you want the cold facts about Mary you will turn to the latest revised

edition of the *Britannica*. As for Deburau, well, he is not even mentioned there.

My collection, then, is not for those who seek the latest facts. For my part I cannot quite see how the purely scientific method applied to biography gives us a necessarily truer picture of a man than the personal and prejudiced account. A pretty paradox might be made on this subject: which gives us a better (and a truer) idea of Balzac the man, Gozlan's gossipy *Balzac en Pantoufles* (which has been especially translated for my volume), or all the latest articles on Balzac in the encyclopedias? Gozlan's occasional fictitious anecdotes are at least characteristic of the man, whereas two columns of scholarly doubt as to Gozlan's veracity give us a picture only of scholarly doubt.

I confess to a liking for the incomplete, the gossipy anecdotes of friends and foes, the biased narratives not yet arranged into connected accounts. In other words, I like to construct my own biographies from many sources. In his little book on Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky has given us delightful glimpses of the aged novelist, and from these I have a far more friendly feeling for the author of *Anna Karenina* than I have ever gotten from the dozen formal tomes that overshadow the Gorky pamphlet on my library shelves. (I wanted to include this in my book, but alas —! Reprinting difficulties are elsewhere referred to in this Preface.)

In biography I believe that everything may be important, and for this reason I have not hesitated to include the most informal accounts I could lay hands on, provided they were otherwise interesting. Saint-Simon, surely one of the world's great biographers, tells us that he has recorded episodes about Louis XIV that will be condemned by his contemporaries as unworthy of an historian, but Saint-Simon is not writing for his day, and he thinks that an account of the Grand Monarch in the boudoir will prove more interesting to posterity, than a long description of an audience with the Turkish ambassador. And Saint-Simon is right.

John Milton sitting in an easy-chair smoking his pipe, described by Augustine Birrell, appeals to me more directly and tells me more about the man than the gaudy painting familiar to all school-children of the poet dictating *Paradise Lost* to his daughters. This last looks "posed," but the bit about the pipe sounds genuine. I wonder what sort of pipe it was, and what kind of tobacco Milton used?

A word here is perhaps necessary to explain why I have included no Oriental biographies. There are two reasons: first, Oriental literature offers us little of what we should call biography; second, I wished to confine my selections to records of those who have influenced or been a part of our Occidental civilization.

In glancing over my Table of Contents for the last time I see I have brought together records of almost every variety, devoted to some sort of description of men and women who have made their contributions to the

world we live in. That they were human beings, impressing and impressed by other human beings, is what strikes me most forcibly, and this is what I have aimed at.

That from the ranks of humanity there can emerge a Socrates, a Cato, a Jesus; a More, a Newton, a Mozart; a Balzac, a Deburau, a Napoleon, is in my eyes a thing more wonderful than all the miracles ever imagined by the makers of religions. A day may come when our religions of magic and fear will give way to a purer and more humanly genial religion, and our desire for an immortality of the soul shall be dedicated to the belief that the great wonder of creation is man and the infinite possibilities that lie not in the theologies of religious leaders, but within ourselves.

Note.—It is hardly necessary to state that I am under obligations of many kinds to the publishers, authors, and translators who have helped me in making this volume. While I was unable to include several biographies I had selected, because of demands which were in most cases utterly unreasonable, I still have to thank many publishers for their courtesy in permitting me to use copyright material. For assistance in many fields I have to thank my publishers, my translators, and several agents. Specific mention of these is made elsewhere. But in this place I wish to thank my wife, Cecile S. Clark, who has read for me several hundreds of volumes and often made the final selection of material herself.

A large part of the material in this book is reprinted. But there are some biographies which I believe are reprinted for the first time since their original appearance. Unless my bibliographical researches are incomplete, these include the biographies of Jesus (the Goodspeed translation), Columbus, Lope de Vega, The Earl of Essex and the Duke of Buckingham; and Louis XIV.

I also believe that none of the following biographies have ever before been translated into English: Mary Queen of Scots (the particular version I translated), *Molière*; Charlotte Corday, Newton, Balzac, and Deburau.

B. H. C.

Contents

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY EUROPE

THE MARQUISE DE RAMBOUILLET — From the <i>Historiettes</i> of Talleyment des Réaux	614
JEAN-BAPTISTE POQUELIN MOLIERE — By Voltaire	624
LOUIS XIV — From the <i>Memoirs</i> , by the Duc de Saint-Simon	632
JOHN MILTON — From <i>Obiter Dicta</i> , by Augustine Birrell	685
SIR ISAAC NEWTON — From the <i>Lives of Illustrious Scientists</i> , by Louis Figuier	704
BARUCH DE SPINOZA — By Jean Maximilien Lucas	716

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EUROPE

ALEXANDER POPE — From <i>The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets</i> , by Samuel Johnson	731
THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH — From <i>The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters</i> , by Allan Cunningham	787
ROBERT BURNS — By Thomas Carlyle	803
PETER THE GREAT — By John Lothrop Motley	846
FREDERIC THE GREAT — By Thomas Babington Macaulay	886
IMMANUEL KANT — By E. A. Car-Wasianski and Thomas De Quincey	943
JOHANN WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART — By Henri Beyle Stendhal	978
CHARLOTTE CORDAY — From <i>Women of the Revolution</i> , by Jules Michelet	1000
JONATHAN SWIFT — From <i>The English Humourists of the 18th Century</i> , by William Makepeace Thackeray	1014
HENRY ST. JOHN, LORD BOLINGBROKE — By Oliver Goldsmith	1031

NINETEENTH CENTURY EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE — By Georg Brandes	1063
HONORÉ DE BALZAC — By Léon Gozlan	1086
JEAN-GASPARD DEBURAU — By Jules Janin	1139
MAURICE DE GUÉRIN — From <i>Essays in Criticism</i> , by Matthew Arnold	1179

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH — From <i>Reminiscences of the English</i> <i>Lakes and the Lake Poets</i> , by Thomas De Quincey . . .	1200
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY — By Thomas Love Peacock . . .	1251
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON — From <i>Critical Kit-Kats</i> , by Sir Edmund Gosse	1300
HENRY DAVID THOREAU — By Ralph Waldo Emerson . . .	1315
WALT WHITMAN — From <i>Walt Whitman, a Study</i> , by John Burroughs	1329
JAMES MCNEILL WHISTLER — From <i>American Portraits</i> , by Gamaliel Bradford	1356
PRINCE OTTO VON BISMARCK — From <i>Genius and Character</i> , by Emil Ludwig	1371
HECTOR BERLIOZ — From <i>Musicians of Today</i> , by Romain Rolland	1378
INDEX	1405

GREAT SHORT BIOGRAPHIES
OF MODERN TIMES

The Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Seventeenth Century Europe

CATHERINE DE VIVONNE,
MARQUISE DE RAMBOUILLET

(1588-1665)

By GÉDÉON TALLEMENT SIEUR DES RÉAUX¹ (1619-1692)



MME. DE RAMBOUILLET, as I have written elsewhere, is a daughter of the late Marquis de Pisani, and a lady named Savelli, widow of one of the Ursins. Her mother was an accomplished woman, who carefully taught her the Italian language, that she might be as familiar with that as she was with French. She was highly esteemed at court, and when the Queen-Mother landed at Marseilles, she was sent there with Mme. de Guise, directress of the Queen's household. Before the present Mme. de Rambouillet reached the age of twelve, her mother married her (with ten thousand crowns' income) to the Vidame of Le Mans.

Mme. de Rambouillet tells me that she regarded her husband, who was twice her age, as a mature man, and herself as a mere child. This attitude of mind she always preserved, and consequently she respected him the more deeply. Except for the matter of the lawsuits, no man ever behaved more considerately toward his wife. She told me that he was always in love with her, and that for her part she had never known an abler man. But as a matter of fact, he deserves no particular credit for treating his wife well, since she was invariably reasonable. Yet she maintains that had she remained single until she was twenty, and had not been obliged to marry, she would have continued single; and I believe this to be true, when I consider that after she had reached twenty she had no further desire to attend the court assemblies at the Louvre — which was a curious thing for a woman of rank who was both young and beautiful. She told me that she took delight only in watching the people there, and that on occasion she would station herself in a side room and observe all the

¹ Translated from the *Historiettes*, by Barrett H. Clark.

Though written in the 17th Century, the *Historiettes* of Tallement were not published until 1836.

confusion that reigns at such occasions in this country. It was not so much that she disliked amusement, but that she preferred to be amused in private.

She had always a taste for beautiful things, and at one time she intended to learn Latin, simply in order to read Vergil, but was prevented from so doing by an illness. Since that time she never again made the attempt, but learned Spanish instead.

She is highly gifted in many fields of activity. It was she who designed the Hôtel de Rambouillet, which originally belonged to her father. Dissatisfied with all the plans that had been made (this was in the days of the Marshal d'Ancre, when we knew nothing about building, and constructed in our small and irregular houses nothing save a hall on one side, a room opposite, and a staircase in the middle), she exclaimed one evening after giving the matter long consideration:

"Quick! Some paper! I've discovered a way of doing what I want." And at once she drew a plan. She knew how to draw, and when once she had seen a house she could design a plan of it with little trouble. It was for this reason that she carried on a controversy with Voiture, because he never remembered anything of the fine buildings he had seen. This was the occasion of the clever banter he addressed to her on the subject of the Valentino castle.

Mme. de Rambouillet's plan was carried out to the last detail, and it was from her that people learned how to put their staircases at the side, in order to permit of a long series of rooms, to make the walls higher, and to have higher and wider windows, facing each other. When the Queen-Mother planned the Luxembourg Palace she sent her architects to the Hôtel de Rambouillet. This was very much worth their while. It was she, too, who first had the idea of painting rooms other than a red or light brown; hence her principal salon was commonly called the Blue Room.

The Hôtel de Rambouillet was, in a manner of speaking, a theatre for every manner of pleasure, the meeting-place of all that was most brilliant at court, and most civilized among the gifted spirits of the time.

Though the Cardinal de Richelieu was under the greatest imaginable obligation to the Cardinal de La Valette, he was most desirous of knowing what he thought — as he so well knew of what others thought. One day, during the absence of Mme. de Rambouillet in Spain, he sent Père Joseph to Mme. de Rambouillet's house, who with every show of innocence induced her to speak of this embassy, and after telling her that her husband having been sent upon a most important negotiation, the Cardinal de Richelieu was in a position to do him a great favour, yet it was necessary that Mme. de Rambouillet should herself perform a service in return, a small favour for His Eminence. He stated that a Prime Minister could not take too many precautions; in a word, the Cardinal desired through

her to give information regarding the intrigues of the Princess and the Cardinal de La Valette.

"Father," she answered, "I do not believe that Madame la Princesse and the Cardinal have any intrigues, but if it were indeed so, I would not be the one to act as a spy in the matter." Père Joseph had gone about this without tact, for the lady was of all people the least self-seeking.

She has declared that the greatest pleasure of all is to send money to others without their knowing where it comes from. She exceeds those who maintain that giving is a king's pleasure; she declares it to be the pleasure of God.

When she told me this little anecdote, she added she was the most honourable of living beings—that she was less able to tolerate members of the clergy as gallants than she could other men. "That is one reason," said she, "why I am content not to have remained in Rome, for while I was pretty sure of doing nothing wrong, I could not be so sure that evil would not be spoken of me. It seems that if scandal had been circulated, my name would have been linked with that of some cardinal."

There was never a better friend than Mme. de Rambouillet. M. d'Andelly, who prided himself on being thought a specialist in teaching friendship, said to her one day that he wished to give her detailed instructions in the art. His lessons were exceedingly prolix, so at a single stroke, in order to make an end of it all, she said to him, "Far from failing to do all in my power for my friends, if I knew there was a deserving man in the Indies I would, though he were quite unknown to me, seek to do everything possible for his advantage." "Ah," cried d'Andelly, "You know that much? Then I have nothing further to teach you."

Mme. de Rambouillet has to this day continued to find amusement in everything. It was always one of her greatest pleasures to be surprising people. Once she did something to M. de Lisieux which he hardly expected. He had gone to see her at Rambouillet where, at the foot of the château, there is a wide meadow, in the middle of which—a freak of nature—rises a circle of rough stones; among these are several tall trees that cast an agreeable shade. Local tradition has it that here Rabelais used to amuse himself: Cardinal du Bellay (a friend of his) and the Rambouillots, who were closely related, were in the habit of spending a good deal of time at the place. There is indeed one hollow rock blackened with smoke which still goes by the name of Rabelais' Pan. The Marquise suggests that M. de Lisieux take a walk in the meadow. When he had come near enough to the rocks to see the foliage clearly, he perceived something shining between the boughs here and there. On coming nearer he thought he saw women dressed like nymphs. At first the Marquise behaved as though she had herself seen nothing of this, but at last, when they had come directly up to the rocks, they saw Mlle. de Rambouillet and all the young ladies of the château clad, as a matter of fact, like nymphs; seated

on the rocks, they formed the prettiest sight that can be imagined. The worthy man was so transported that he never since, on seeing the Marquise, failed to enquire about the rocks of Rambouillet.

If she had been able to afford it, she would assuredly have offered more costly entertainments. I have heard her say that it would have given her pleasure to build a beautiful house at the far end of the park at Rambouillet, so well concealed that not even her friends would suspect its existence. The thing would not indeed have been so very difficult, since the site is somewhat out of the way, and the park one of the most extensive in France, a musket-shot's distance away from the château, an old-fashioned building. She would then have invited her best friends to Rambouillet, and the day after their arrival, when wandering through the park, suggest that they all go to see a fair house which one of her neighbours had had built some time since. "I would then," she said, "after taking them by many circuitous paths conduct them to my new house—which would be shown them without any of my family or servants being seen; only those who were perfect strangers. At last I would have asked them to remain in this charming abode, the owner of which was a friend who would not object to my thus making free with it." "Imagine," she added, "their astonishment on learning that my secret had been kept solely in order to give them a pleasant surprise."

On one occasion she very amusingly caught the Comte de Guiche (now Marshal de Gramont) in a trap. He was still quite young when he first began to visit the Hôtel de Rambouillet. On taking leave of the Marquise one evening, M. de Chaudebonne, her closest friend and also on friendly terms with de Guiche, remarked to him: "Do not go, Count. Have supper here." "Good Heavens, you must be joking!", exclaimed the Marquise. "Would you starve him?" "It is Madame who is joking," said Chaudebonne. "Please remain." And he did remain.

Whereupon Mlle. Paulet (all had been planned out beforehand) came in with Mlle. de Rambouillet, and supper was served. But on the table nothing was set save what the Count did not care for: during the conversation beforehand they had made him state his culinary aversions; among these were milk soup and large turkey-cock. Mlle. Paulet performed her rôle in this affair to perfection. "M. le Comte," said she, "this milk soup is the finest that ever was; you are not pleased with it?—And Good Heavens, that turkey-cock, 'tis as tender as a woodcock! But I see you are not tasting that bit of white meat I served! You should have some of these tender bits from the backbone." She bent all her energies upon serving him, while he was equally assiduous in thanking her. But he was overcome with embarrassment, and wondered over so poor a supper, crumbling bread with his fingers.

But finally, after everyone had been sufficiently diverted, Mme. de Rambouillet said to her steward: "Bring other things: M. le Comte finds

nothing to his taste." Thereupon a magnificent supper was served up, not without great merry-making.

Still another prank was played on the Count at Rambouillet. The company had partaken of a large quantity of mushrooms one evening. They persuaded the Count's valet to get possession of all the doublets belonging to him that he had brought there. They took these and sewed them in places, making them much smaller. Next morning Chaudebonne called on him as he was dressing, and as the Count began to put on his doublet, he found it at least four inches too small.

"This doublet is very small," he said to his valet. "Let me have the one I wore yesterday." But that was no larger than the first.

"Let me try them all on." But they were all too small.

"What is amiss?" he asked. "What? I'm swollen up? Did I eat too many mushrooms?"

"That may be," answered Chaudebonne. "You ate a bellyful last night." When the others came in they all said the same thing. How strong is the imagination! Though the Count's colour was as healthy as it was the evening before, he yet thought he perceived signs of fever.

At that moment the bell rang announcing Mass — it was Sunday — and the Count had time only to slip on a dressing-gown. After Mass, he was much worried over his swelling, and said with a nervous laugh, "This would indeed be a fine death — eating mushrooms at the age of twenty-one!"

The joke, apparently, was going too far, and Chaudebonne suggested an antidote which he had just called to mind. He wrote it out and handed it to the Count.

*"Take a pair of scissors and cut the
stitches out of your doublets,"*

it ran.

Somewhat later Mlle. de Rambouillet and M. de Chaudebonne did, as a matter of fact, eat poisonous mushrooms, and heaven knows what would have happened if Mlle. de Rambouillet had not found by chance some theriac in a cupboard. This looked like a sort of revenge for the trick played on the Comte de Guiche.

Mme. de Rambouillet has six children in all: Mme. de Montausier, the eldest; Mme. d'Hyères; M. de Pisani. Then there was a fine boy who died of the plague at the age of eight. His nurse had gone to visit someone who was suffering from that disease, and on returning was so stupid as to kiss the child; both she and the boy died. Then there were Mme. de Saint-Etienne and Mme. de Pisani. All the daughters are now in religious orders, except the first, and the last, who is Mlle. de Rambouillet.

When he was born, M. de Pisani was fair, light-complexioned, and straight of limb, but in infancy he suffered an injury to the spine no one

knows how. He grew up so deformed that it is impossible to fit an armour breastplate on him. This deformity affected even his features; and he was very short, though both his parents and all his brothers and sisters are tall. They were once called the Fir-trees of Rambouillet; the brothers were tall, but none of them was the least bit stout. M. de Pisani, as though to compensate for his physical shortcomings, was well endowed with mental agility and courage. He never shone particularly in his studies, because he was afraid he might be made to enter the church, nor had he done much reading, even in his own language. But he began to be interested in reading when eight of Cicero's orations were translated by M. d'Ablancourt and M. Patru, which he liked and read frequently. He was an exceptional adept in reasoning; it seemed as though all of logic resided in his brain. He was also a quick wit, and therefore often more welcome than men with the shapeliest figures. He was exceedingly fond of gambling and women. He once, when in need of money, convinced his parents — who had spent but one night at Rambouillet in twenty-eight years — that there was some dead wood in the park that ought to be cleared out. Securing their permission, he ordered some six hundred bundles of the finest wood cut down, and sold it.

He often argued with M. le Prince, and once said to him, "Make me a royal prince in your stead, and have everything in your favour; I should always have the better of you." He invariably accompanied the Prince to war, though he was a sorry-looking fellow on horseback. People used to call him M. le Prince's pack camel. He met his death at the Battle of Nördlingen, being at the time with Marshal Gramont's flank, when it was broken. The Chevalier de Gramont shouted to him: "This way, Pisani! This is safer!" But it seemed he had no wish to fly in such bad company, for Gramont had a poor reputation for courage. Making off in another direction, he met some Croats, who killed him.

Let me tell one pleasant story about him. Mme. de Rambouillet, who is a sensitive soul, was in the habit of saying that nothing was so ridiculous as a man in bed, and that a night-cap was a very foolish thing. Mme. de Montausier's aversion to night-caps was even greater; but Mlle. d'Arquenay (who is now the Abbess of St. Etienne in Reims), hated them even more. One day her brother requested her to come to his rooms. The moment she arrived, five or six men suddenly rushed in from another room, all of them wearing night-caps. They had white coiffes; if they had been wanting, the lady would surely have died of terror. She screamed and turned to go. Her brother cried out to her: "Good heavens, sister, you do not think I would summon you here for nothing? I beg you to sit down and eat with me." Thereupon she was forced to sit at table with him, and be served by men in night-caps.

Ever after — until he was so seriously wounded at Montansais in 1652 — the Marquis de Montausier, who knew of Mlle. d'Arquenay's aversion

for night-caps, never used one when sleeping with his wife, though she asked him to do so. This is the origin of the saying that real *Précieuses* dread night-caps.

M. de Pisani and Voiture were good friends. Once, when it was excessively cold, M. de Pisani remarked, "To think I have only one shirt!" "But how do you manage?", asked the person he had addressed. "How do I manage! I simply shiver."

One day a healthy-looking beggar came to one of the entrances of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. He asked Mme. de Rambouillet for money, and she said to M. de Pisani: "You ought to give this poor wretch something."

"I should think not," he said. "Rather borrow from him. I hear he has over a thousand crowns."

Returning again to Mme. de Rambouillet's predilection for surprising people, she had had a spacious room built with three high windows facing in three directions, one toward the garden of the Quinze-Vingts hospital for the blind, one toward the Hôtel de Chevreuse, and one toward the garden of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. She had had this room built, painted, and furnished without it being even noticed by any one of the numerous persons who were always at her home. It was necessary for the labourers to go over to the other side of the wall separating her house from the one next it, and work from that side, since the new room juts out into the hospital garden. There was only one person — M. Arnould — who was curious enough to climb the ladder he saw standing against the wall. But when he had got only as far as the second rung, he was called elsewhere, and never again gave the matter a second thought.

There was a great meeting one evening at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, and suddenly a noise was heard from the other side of the tapestries. A door then opened, and Mlle. de Rambouillet (she who is now Mme. de Montausier) appeared, clad in a magnificent dress, standing in a spacious and imposing room, beautifully illuminated. The surprise of the entire company may well be imagined, since everyone thought that nothing existed beyond the tapestries but the Quinze-Vingts garden. But now they beheld a beautiful, well decorated, spacious room. It seemed to have been transported there by magic.

Not long after, M. Chapelain brought in secret a piece of parchment and affixed it to the door of the new room. On the parchment he had written the ode in which Zyrphée, Queen of Angennes, states that she had made this bower to protect Arthenice from the relentless years. (As I shall tell, Mme. de Rambouillet suffered many ills.) Now, is it credible that a gentleman (a descendant, indeed, of Godefroy de Bouillon) who, respecting neither Zyrphée nor the great Arthenice, would rob this room, called Zyrphée's Bower, of one of its chief ornaments? M. de Chevreuse conceived the idea of building a sort of closet, which closed up the garden window. When blamed for this, he replied, "True, M. de Rambouillet

is a good neighbour, to whom I am indebted for my life. But where am I to put my clothes?" And he already had forty rooms!

After M. de Rambouillet's death, Mme. de Montausier turned her father's room into a pleasant and charming apartment. She wished to dedicate it on its completion, and gave a dinner there to her mother. Mlle. de Rambouillet, Mme. de Saint-Etienne (then in holy orders) and herself, served the meal, not one man, even M. de Montausier, being present. Mme. de Rambouillet also arranged her apartment, which was neither less charming nor expertly planned.

I remember that mother and daughter used to be told — in regard to the many alcoves and chapels here and there — that something was every year taken from the Hôtel de Chevreuse in order to avenge the insult done to Zyrphée.

I must now speak of Mme. de Rambouillet's infirmities. There is one in particular that ought to be described at length. Those who do not look closely believe it to be quite imaginary.

When she was perhaps thirty-five years old, she perceived that when she approached fire her blood became strangely heated, and caused weakness. But she liked to be warm, and did not therefore avoid coming near to fires; indeed, when the cold weather came, she would try once again whether fire had the same effect upon her as before. But she discovered that the effect was even worse. Then she tried the experiment again the following winter, and found it impossible even to approach the fire. A few years after that, even the warmth of the sun affected her, yet she would not avoid the sunlight, for no one took greater pleasure in promenading about the rural part of Paris. Yet she was forced to give up these pleasures — at least while the sun was shining; for on one occasion, when she set out for Saint-Cloud, she had no more than reached the Cours when she fainted. The blood could be actually seen seething in her veins, since she has a most delicate skin.

This strange disease became worse with the years. Once, when a stove had been inadvertently left under her bed, I saw her come down with erysipelas. Consequently, she is now forced to remain in the house almost constantly, and never seek the warmth outside. It was from necessity that she took over from the Spaniards the idea of the alcove, which is so stylish nowadays in Paris. When others are present they go into the ante-room in order to warm themselves. When the weather is very cold she sits up in bed with her legs wrapped in a bearskin sack, and says good-humouredly that she becomes deaf on St. Martin's Day and recovers at Easter. This on account of the elaborate head-gear which she must wear in winter-time.

During the long cold spells of the last winter she risked lighting a little fire in a small fire-place in one of her little alcoves. A large screen was set some distance off, and the heat was very moderate. But before long the

heat produced its usual effect upon her. This last summer she imagined she would die of the heat, though as a matter of fact, her house was quite cool.

When she last visited Rambouillet she composed prayers before the barricade, which are exceedingly well-written. She had given them to M. Conrart, for copying by Jarry, whose manuscript is in imitation of printed type; this is said to be the very finest writing imaginable. They were copied on parchment, and handsomely bound, and returned to the author. Jarry was rather simple-minded in this connexion. "If you please, Monsieur," he said, "allow me to keep some of these prayers: in the Books of Hours I copy there are occasionally some so stupid that I blush to transcribe them."

While at Rambouillet on this occasion the Marquise developed a charming idea in her park, keeping it quite secret from those whom it was intended to surprise. Like the others, I too was deceived. The house steward, Chavaroché, who used to be the Marquis de Pisani's tutor, was commissioned to show the thing to me. He led me, by a circuitous way, to a point where I heard a loud roar, like a waterfall. It was always asserted that there was no running water at Rambouillet, so that my surprise can be easily conceived when I saw before me a cascade, a jet and a pond, and besides these, a large open expanse of water all churned up. Beyond that rose a high jet, and then still another broad expanse that carried off all the water into the meadow land, where it disappeared from view. All this was shaded by the loveliest imaginable trees. The water had been brought from a large pond in the park, which was on a higher level. This Mme. de Rambouillet had brought down by pipes which appeared above the ground where the cascade suddenly seems to emerge from between the boughs of an oak-tree. Behind this, the trees were so cleverly arranged that it was not possible to see the pipe. The Marquise had directed the work to be done well and quickly, that M. de Montausier might be taken totally unawares when he arrived. The evening he came — it was at night — it was necessary to hang lanterns on the trees and set torches about, in order that the working-men might see what they were doing. Besides deriving pleasure from the splendid effects of such lighting among the leaves and the reflections in the pools of the great square pond, she was at the height of joy over the astonishment of the Marquis the following day, when he received so many various pleasurable surprises.

Mme. de Rambouillet always claimed — excessively, I think — to be able to prophesy. She told me of several instances where her prophecies have come to pass. When the late King was at the point of death, persons would declare, "The king will die tomorrow." But she had said, "No, he will not die until Ascension. I prophesied this a month ago." And on the morning of Ascension Day the King was a little better, but she declared he would die before the day was over. He did actually breathe his last on that day.

She likewise accurately foretold that Mme. la Princesse would be brought to bed on Lady Day.

She detested the King; whatever he did was distasteful to her, as though it were precisely what should not have been done. Mlle. de Rambouillet used to say, "I much fear my mother's dislike for the King will prove fatal to her."

One day in the country, as she was looking out of the window, she declared that a certain man who was riding by on horseback was an apothecary. She sent to inquire, and learned that she was right.

The Marquise is rather too inclined to compliment persons about whom it is not worth while to bother. Yet this is a rare fault nowadays, when politeness has well-nigh disappeared. She is perhaps a trifle too fastidious in her tastes: occasionally a word — in a satire or an epigram — will, she declares, arouse distasteful ideas in her. There are some expressions which no one would have the temerity to utter in her presence. This, I believe, is going to extremes, particularly in an age of freedom. In general, she and her husband are rather too ceremonious.

She is still most pleasing in appearance, though her head trembles slightly, the result of an overdose of ambergris. She has a good complexion, and some stupid persons declare it is because of this that she would never come near a fire — as though there were no such things as screens! She declared once that what she most wished for her bodily comfort, was to be able to warm herself as much as she liked.

Last winter she went to the country, the weather being moderate; yet this was exceptional, and she was only half a league away from Paris. A disease she contracted there turned her lips a disagreeable colour. She has used rouge since then. I wish she had not done so.

Her mind is as fresh and her memory as clear as though she were only thirty years old.

What is finest and best in this book, both what I have written and shall write, I have gotten from her.

She reads constantly, and with no evil effects. Reading is her chief diversion. She is somewhat too ready to believe (putting it mildly) that the Savelli family is the very finest family in the world.

JEAN-BAPTISTE POQUELIN MOLIERE

1622-1673

By FRANÇOIS AROUET VOLTAIRE ¹ (1694-1778)



THE predilection of many readers for the frivolous, and the desire to make up a volume out of what should fill only a few pages, are the reasons why the biographies of celebrated men are nearly always ruined by the inclusion of useless details and popular fairy tales as false as they are insipid. This is precisely what happened with the edition of Racine's plays published at Paris in 1728. It will be the writer's task to avoid that pitfall in this short account of the life of Molière: nothing will be said of him personally except what is believed to be true and deserving of repetition, while nothing will be said of his works which is contrary to the notions of the cultured public.

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin was born in Paris in 1620 [1622] in a house that is still standing, beneath the colonnades of the *Halles*. His father, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, a *Valet de chambre tapissier* in the King's service, and his mother Anne Boutet, gave him an education that conformed, of necessity, too closely to their position in life, which the boy was intended to accept. Up to the age of fourteen he remained in their shop, having learned there nothing beyond his trade except to read and write a little. His parents secured for him the privilege of their Court appointment under the King. But his genius was already leading him elsewhere. It has been remarked that nearly all those who have made a name for themselves in the fine arts have cultivated them in spite of their parents, and that nature has always proved herself stronger than formal education.

Poquelin had a grandfather who loved the theater, and was in the habit of taking the lad occasionally to the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*. At a very early age the young man conceived an unconquerable aversion to his trade. His taste for study developed; he brought pressure to bear upon his grandfather to have him sent to school, and ultimately secured the consent of his father, who put him in a boarding-school under the direction of the Jesuits. He took this step with all the reluctance of a bourgeois who thought that learning would ruin his son's chances of success as a tradesman.

¹ Translated from the French, *La Vie de Molière* (Paris, 1730), especially for this collection, by Barrett H. Clark.

At school the young Poquelin succeeded as brilliantly as might have been expected from his ardent desire to be sent there. He studied for five years, following courses with Armand de Bourbon, first Prince de Conti, who was subsequently to become a patron of literature and of Molière.

There were at that time in the *Collège* two youths who have since acquired a reputation in the world: Chapelle and Bernier, the latter known for his *Travels in the Indies*, the other celebrated for his graceful and natural verse, which has done him the more honor since he did not seek fame as a poet.

L'Huillier, a man of independent fortune, went to considerable pains to see to the education of Chapelle, his natural son; and in order to furnish him with an object of emulation, had him study with young Bernier, whose parents were in straitened circumstances. Instead of giving his illegitimate son the first preceptor who happened to be there (as so many fathers are used to do even with the legitimate sons who are to bear their names), he engaged the services of the celebrated Gassendi.

Gassendi, who had soon perceived the genius of Poquelin, brought him together with Chapelle and Bernier in their studies. Never was there a more illustrious master with worthier disciples. He taught them the philosophy of Epicurus which, though it be as false as the other philosophies, at least had the virtue of possessing more method and being more reasonable than that of the school, and none of its barbarity.

Poquelin studied continuously under Gassendi and on leaving the *Collège* received from this philosopher the principles of a morality more useful than his Physics. During the entire course of his life he rarely departed from the principles that had been given him.

His father becoming infirm and unable longer to take his place at Court, the young man was forced to fulfil his duties for him in the King's service. He returned with Louis XIII to Paris, and there his passion for the theater, which had in the first place induced him to study, was quickly revived.

The theater was at that time beginning to flourish. Dramatic literature, so despised when it is mediocre, contributes to the glory of a state in its perfected form. Before 1625 there was no permanent troupe of actors in Paris. Only a few low mummers wandered, as in Italy, from city to city, playing the plays of Hardy, Montcrestien, or of Balthazar Baro, who was subsequently made a member of the French Academy. These authors sold their works outright to the troupes at ten crowns each.

Pierre Corneille brought the theater out of this low and barbarous state toward the year 1630. His first comedies, as good for his day as they are poor for our own, resulted in the establishment of a permanent troupe of actors in Paris. Shortly after that time Cardinal Richelieu's fondness for plays rendered the theater fashionable. There were then more private companies acting plays than there are today.

Poquelin, in association with certain gifted young persons with a talent for declamation, played in the Faubourg Saint-Germain and in the Saint-Paul Quarter. Before long this troupe eclipsed all the others, and went under the name of the *Illustre-Théâtre*. We learn from a printed tragedy of that time, entitled *Artaxerce*, by one Magnon, published in 1645, that it was acted on the stage of the *Illustre-Théâtre*.

It was during his association with this theater that Poquelin, realising his talent, determined to dedicate himself entirely to its development, to become at once an actor and an author, and to secure from his talents both profit and glory.

We know that among the Athenians the poets often acted in their own plays, and that they were not thereby dishonoured for having spoken beautifully before their fellow-citizens. Poquelin was rather encouraged by this idea than restrained by the prejudices of his day. He took the name of Molière, and in so doing he did no more than follow the example of the Italian actors and those of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*. One whose family name was Le Grand, called himself Belleville when playing tragedy, and Turlupin when playing farce. (Hence the word *Turlupinage*.) Hugues Guéret was known in serious plays under the name of Fléchelles, while in farce he invariably played a certain rôle under the name of Gautier-Garguille.

Similarly, Harlequin and Scaramouche were known only by these theater names. There had already been an actor called Molière, who was author of a tragedy, *Polixène*.

The new Molière was unknown to fame during the entire time of the Civil Wars in France. These years he devoted to cultivating his talents and preparing plays. He had made a collection of Italian dramatic sketches which he developed into little comedies for performance before provincial audiences. These first very immature efforts belonged rather to the crude Italian theater from which he had taken them, than to that new theater which his genius was to bring to its culmination. Genius expands or languishes according to the circumstances that surround it. For the provinces he wrote *Le Docteur amoureux*, *Les Trois Docteurs rivaux*, and *Le Maître d'école*, of which there remain only the titles. Those interested in such matters have preserved for us two of Molière's plays written in the early style: *Le Médecin volant* and *La Jalousie du Barbouillé*. These are in prose, and entirely written out in dialogue. A few speeches and incidents of the first have been incorporated into *Le Médecin malgré lui*, while *La Jalousie du Barbouillé* is found, in a far more developed form, in the third act of *George Dandin*.

The first regular five-act play he wrote was *L'Étourdi*, a comedy which he first produced at Lyon in 1658. There was in that city then a company of provincial actors, which disbanded the moment Molière's troupe arrived.

Some of the actors of this company joined Molière. The latter's com-

pany left Lyon for the Languedoc region, with a relatively well-balanced company, composed principally of two brothers of the name of Gros-René; Duparc; a pastry-cook from the Rue St. Honoré; and the ladies Duparc, Béjart, and de Brie.

The Prince de Conti, who governed the districts of Languedoc at Béziers, remembered Molière from his college days, and extended to him his especial protection. It was before him that Molière produced *L'Etourdi*, *Le Dépit amoureux*, and *Les Précieuses ridicules*.

This last little play, written in the provinces, bears sufficient testimony to the fact that its author aimed his shafts at no other ridiculous pretensions than those of the provincial ladies. He subsequently discovered, however, that it might likewise serve to criticise the follies of court and town.

Molière was at this time thirty-four years of age, the same age at which Corneille wrote *Le Cid*. It is very difficult for any writer to succeed at an earlier age in the dramatic form, which requires an extensive knowledge of the world and the human heart.

It is sometimes averred that the Prince de Conti desired to make Molière his secretary, but that, happily for the glory of the French Theater, Molière had the courage to prefer the development of his talent to a position of honor. If this is true, it does equal honor to the Prince and to the actor. After having played in the provinces for some time — appearing at Grenoble, at Lyon, and at Rouen — he finally arrived at Paris, in 1658. The Prince de Conti introduced him to Monsieur, only brother of Louis XIV, and Monsieur presented him to the King and the Queen-Mother. The same year his troupe presented before their Majesties the tragedy of *Nicomède*, on a stage erected by order of the King in the *Salle des Gardes* of the old Louvre.

A regular company of actors had for some time been established in the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*. The members of this company were present at the first performance of the new troupe. After the close of *Nicomède* Molière appeared on the stage and, taking the liberty of addressing the King, thanked His Majesty for his indulgence, and tactfully praised the actors of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*, whose jealousy he had sufficient reason to fear. He concluded his remarks by asking leave to present a little play in one act which he had shown in the provinces.

The fashion of playing these little farces after the long plays had gone out at the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*. But the King accepted Molière's offer, and the troupe immediately played *Le Docteur amoureux*. Ever since that day the custom has survived of giving one-act or three-act plays at the conclusion of the usual five-act dramas.

Molière's troupe was now permitted to establish itself in Paris. They therefore remained, and shared with the Italian Actors (who had been in possession for some years) the *Théâtre du Petit-Bourbon*. Molière's company played on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, while the Italians

played on the other days. The *Hôtel de Bourgogne* troupe played only three times a week, except when they had new pieces to offer.

Molière's company was known as the *Troupe of Monsieur*, who was its protector. Two years later, in 1660, Monsieur allowed them to use the Great Room of the Palais-Royal. The Cardinal de Richelieu had had this built for the production of the tragedy *Mirame*, to which the Minister had himself contributed more than five hundred lines. This Room was as ill-constructed as the play for which it was built. I am forced to remark here that even to this day we have no proper theater buildings. Our theaters are relics of Gothic barbarism, with which the Italians are quite right in reproaching us. We have good plays in France, but the Italians have the good theaters.

Molière's troupe enjoyed the use of the Room up to the time of the death of its patron. It was then given over to those who had the privilege of presenting opera, though the place was still less suitable for singing than for declamation.

From 1658 to 1673, a period of fifteen years, Molière wrote and produced all his plays, to the number of thirty. He had ambitions to play tragedy, but in this field he was not successful.

He was exceedingly voluble in speech and had a sort of hiccough, which was quite unsuited to serious rôles. This, however, served only to make his acting in comedy the more enjoyable.

The wife of one of our finest actors has furnished the following description of Molière's person:

"He was neither too fat nor too thin; he was tall rather than short; he had a noble manner and shapely legs; he walked with a certain gravity and had a very serious air. His nose was large, likewise his mouth; his lips were thick, his complexion dark; his eyebrows were black and bushy, and the way in which he moved them gave his expression an exquisitely comic turn. As to his personal character, he was gentle, obliging, and generous. He had an extreme fondness for harangue, and when he read his plays to the company, he liked to have them bring their children in order to judge of his effects from their unpremeditated response."

While in Paris, Molière made for himself a great number of friends, but almost as many enemies. In accustoming the public to the best kind of comedy, he had taught it to judge him with the utmost severity. The same spectators who applauded the mediocre plays of other authors, raised severe objections to the slightest shortcomings of Molière. Men judge of us according to the expectation which we have aroused in them, and the least shortcoming of a celebrated writer (in addition to the malignity of the public) is sufficient to cause the failure of a good work. This explains why the *Britannicus* and *Les Plaideurs* of Racine were so ill received, and why *L'Avare*, *Le Misanthrope*, *Les Femmes savantes*, and *L'Ecole des femmes* had so little success when they were first acted.

Louis XIV, who had good natural taste and a well-balanced though uncultivated mind, often brought court and town, because of his approbation, to see the plays of Molière acted. It would, however, have done the nation more honor to have dispensed with the decision of its master and formed its own judgments. Molière had cruel enemies, especially among the inferior writers of the day and their cliques. He also aroused the opposition of the pious, who accused him of writing scandalous books. He was charged with having exposed powerful persons in the characters of his plays, whereas he had done nothing but hold up vices in general for the reprobation of mankind. He would have suffered punishment as a result of these accusations had not the same King who encouraged and supported Racine and Despréaux likewise protected him.

But he received from the King a pension of only one thousand livres, and his troupe only seven thousands. The profits he made by the success of his plays gave him as much as he had reason to hope for, and what he earned by means of his troupe, together with what he had already invested, yielded a total income of thirty thousand livres a year, a sum which in those days represented almost twice that amount today.

The influence he had with the King is shown by his securing a canonship for the son of his physician, Mauvilain. Everyone has heard how, sitting at dinner with the King one day, "You have a doctor," said he to Molière. "What does he do to you?" "Sire," replied Molière, "we converse together; he prescribes remedies for me which I do not take, and I am cured."

He made an honourable and wise disposition of his fortune, and entertained the most estimable persons — Chapelle, Jonsac, Desbarreaux, and the like — men who enjoyed material pleasures, as well as those of the intellect. He had a country house at Auteuil where he often found relaxation from the fatigues of his profession, which are far more arduous than is commonly supposed. The Maréchal de Vivonne, well-known for his brilliant mind and his friendship for Despréaux, was a close friend of Molière's. The two were as intimate as Lælius and Terence. The Great Condé insisted that Molière should come often to see him, and declared that he always learned something from intercourse with him.

The extent of Molière's liberality was far greater than the mere charity of other men. He frequently encouraged, through presents of considerable value, indigent young writers in whom he discerned talent, and it is perhaps to Molière that France is indebted for Racine. He engaged the young Racine, who had just come from Port-Royal at the age of nineteen, to work for the theater. It was he who had him write the tragedy of *Théagène et Cariclée*; and although this play was not good enough to deserve production, he gave the young author a hundred louis and the plot for *Les Frères ennemis*.

It is possibly not superfluous to add that about the same time, in 1661,

Racine had written an *Ode on the Marriage of Louis XIV*, and M. Colbert had sent him a hundred louis on behalf of the King.

It is a lamentable reflection upon the honor of literature that Molière and Racine quarrelled subsequent to their early association: such great geniuses, of whom one had been the other's benefactor, ought to have remained friends.

Molière sponsored and developed another man, who by the superiority of his talents and the singular gifts bestowed upon him by nature, deserves to be remembered by posterity. This was the actor Baron, who was unsurpassed both in tragic and comic rôles. Molière looked after him as though he had been his own son.

One day Baron informed him that a provincial actor, whose poverty prevented his coming in person, had asked of Molière a small loan to enable him to join his company. Molière, remembering the man as a certain Mondorge, a former comrade, asked Baron how much he thought he ought to give. Baron answered offhand, "Four pistoles." "Give him four pistoles for me," answered Molière, "and here are twenty that you are to give him from yourself." And to this gift he added a magnificent theatrical costume.

Another personal trait deserves to be recorded. One day, after giving alms to a pauper, the latter turned and ran after him, saying, "Monsieur, you surely did not mean to give me a louis d'or? I have come to return it to you." "Well, my friend," said Molière, "here is another," and added, "So should we reward virtue." This sufficiently indicates that it was his habit to reflect upon all that came to his notice, and that he whose object it was to portray nature, studied it in men upon all occasions.

Though he was fortunate and happy in his artistic successes and his patrons, favored by fortune and friends alike, he was yet unhappy in his domestic life. In 1661 he had married a young girl, daughter of Mlle. Béjart and of a gentleman named Modène. It has been said that Molière himself was her father, and the care taken to spread this calumny has caused many persons to go to great pains in refuting it. It has been clearly established that Molière did not know the mother until after the birth of this daughter. The great difference in their ages, and the hazards incident to the career of a young and beautiful actress, rendered this an unhappy union.

Molière, philosopher though he was, suffered in his own home from those very forms of discouragement, bitterness, even of ridicule, that he had so often portrayed on the stage. So true is it that those men who are superior to others by their talents, almost invariably resemble them in their weaknesses. Why indeed should our talents place us above humanity!

The last play he wrote was *Le Malade imaginaire*. For some time his lungs had been affected, and he occasionally coughed up blood. On the day of the third performance of this play, his condition was worse than it

had ever been, and he was advised not to act. But he insisted upon making an effort which was beyond his powers, and this effort cost him his life. Just as he spoke the word *Juro* in the ballet of the reception of the imaginary invalid, he was seized with a convulsion, but was none the less able to finish the play. He was carried in a dying condition to his house in the Rue de Richelieu. For a short while he was helped by two nuns who had come to Paris during Lent, and were at the time staying with him. He died in their arms of a hemorrhage on the 17th of February, 1673, at the age of fifty-three. He left only one child, a daughter, endowed with considerable intelligence. His widow married the actor Guérin. His misfortune in dying without being able to secure the Last Sacrament, and the prejudice generally felt against the theater (though his plays were free from offense), were the reasons why he was at first refused Christian burial. This was a source of regret to the King, who had the complacency to request the Archbishop of Paris to see that his servant and pensioner was buried in a church. The curé of Molière's parish, Saint-Eustache, would not take the matter in charge. The people, who recognised in Molière only the actor and knew not that he had been a fine writer, a philosopher and a great man in his sphere, gathered in a crowd before the door of his house on the day of the funeral. Molière's widow was obliged to throw money to them from the window, and the wretches, who would in their ignorance have disturbed the burial, followed respectfully the hearse of the great man.

The difficulty encountered in securing suitable burial, as well as the injustices he had suffered during his life, caused the famous Père Bouhours to compose the following epitaph, which of all those written for Molière, is the only one that deserves to be remembered, and is the only one that is not to be found in the poor and misleading biography which has always served as an introduction to the editions of his works:

"You reformed the town and the court, but what was your recompense? Frenchmen will one day blush for their want of gratitude. They needed an actor who would use his fame and his talent for their sakes. But, Monsieur, nothing had been lacking for your glory if, among the vices you so well depicted, you had added the ingratitude of your fellow-countrymen!"

I have not only omitted from this life of Molière the fairy tales relating to Chapelle and his friends, but I am forced to declare that these, first told by Grimarest, are without foundation. The late Duc de Sully, the last Prince de Vendôme, and the Abbé de Chaulieu, all of whom were intimate with Chapelle, have assured me that these little tales are pure invention.

LOUIS XIV

1638-1715

By LOUIS DE ROUVROY, DUC DE SAINT-SIMON¹



It must be acknowledged that Louis XIV possessed many good qualities and a certain greatness, yet it cannot be denied that there was much in him that was bad, and even petty. We are unable to distinguish clearly between the traits of his character that he had received from nature and those that resulted from his environment. The majority who have written about him were not very well informed; of those who came into personal touch with him there were few who could describe his character; and fewer who had sufficient balance to write impartially, without spite or undeserved praise. Regarding the first point, I can assure you of the accuracy of my sources; as for the rest, I shall try honestly to put aside all prejudice during the course of my remarks and tell the unvarnished truth, whether it be in praise or in blame.

I shall say nothing about his earlier years. Becoming king when scarcely more than a child, he was carefully kept out of the way by his mother, who wished to rule the realm herself; and subsequently by the selfish policy of a malicious minister, under whose yoke he remained until he was released by death. This entire period, therefore, may be ignored, as it does not really form a part of his reign. But even under the disadvantage of having a strong minister in power, his character was developing. He began to feel the attractions of love and glory, and tried, feebly though it were, to succeed in both. He realised that a life of laziness was incompatible with glory, and if he lacked the power to overthrow Mazarin, he had sense enough of his own dignity to look upon Mazarin's death as a deliverance. That was one of the epochs in his life when he appeared most advantageously, for it was then that he formed the determination, to which he firmly adhered, never to have a prime minister, or allow a churchman to become a member of his council. He formed another, and that was to govern the country himself. Though he was never to realize it, he was unable to carry this out. It was this that he took most pride in, and of this his flatterers took most advantage. But he was never under a greater delusion.

¹ Translated from the *Memoirs* of Saint-Simon, especially for this collection, by Barrett H. Clark. Though they were known to historians in MS. form, Saint-Simon's *Memoirs* were not published until 1829-30.

His natural gifts were not even mediocre; but he had a mind capable of development, of receiving polish, of taking what was best in the minds of others without exactly imitating it; and throughout his life he profited greatly by associating with the ablest and wittiest persons, both men and women, of various stations in society. He entered the world — if I may use the expression in referring to a king who had completed his twenty-third year — at a fortunate time, since men of distinction abounded. His ministers and generals at that time, with successors trained in their school, are everywhere acknowledged to have been the best in Europe; for the domestic struggles and foreign wars from which France had suffered ever since the passing of Louis XIII had brought out many brilliant men, and the Court was composed of able and illustrious persons.

The wit and cleverness of the Comtesse de Soissons, together with the splendid traditions of her uncle Cardinal Mazarin, had made her the leading light of the Court, and her home was the centre of a select circle, the daily resort of the most distinguished ladies and gentlemen, and the heart of all intrigues, both of gallantry and of ambition. The King entered at once into this brilliant company, and there he acquired that air of politeness and gallantry which he retained throughout his life, and which he understood so well how to combine with a kingly dignity. This manner suited him exactly. Among all who surrounded him he was by his handsome appearance, the dignity of his manner, the sound of his voice, as easily distinguished as the queen-bee in her hive. Even if he had been born in an obscure family, he would have shone wherever there were fêtes, amusements, and gallantry, and have had many successes in love. If he gave in to temptation, he is rather to be pitied than censured. It is to his credit that he could occasionally tear himself loose from the pleasures of love to follow the path of glory.

The reign of Louis may be divided into three periods. The first began brilliantly. The Spanish King was forced to apologise for an insult offered by his Ambassador in London to the Ambassador of France, and to acknowledge the precedence of French ambassadors over Spanish. Likewise reparation was exacted for an insult offered to the Duc de Créquy, French Ambassador at Rome, by certain persons connected with the Pope and his Corsican guards. A little later, the death of the Spanish King gave the young ruler a chance to seek the glory he so eagerly desired, and despite the renunciations so recently and solemnly made at the time of his wedding, he led an army into Flanders. His conquests were quick; he forced his way over the Rhine; the Triple Alliance (England, Sweden, and Holland), formed against him seemed only to spur him on. In the middle of winter he occupied Franche-Comté, which he later relinquished at the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, on condition that he retain his conquests in Flanders.

At that time France was rich and prosperous. Under Colbert's able

administration the finances, the navy, trade, and manufactures, even literature and the arts, had reached their apogee. It was like the age of Augustus; for distinguished men were plentiful in every walk of life, even among those who merely furnished our pleasures. The Department of War was in the hands of Le Tellier and his son Louvois; who, being jealous of Colbert, induced the King to engage in another war. His successes so greatly alarmed all Europe that it produced long-felt consequences, which at last almost ruined France. Colbert's jealousy was the real cause of the celebrated war with Holland, during which the King's love for Mme. de Montespan beclouded his glory and caused injury to his kingdom. Nearly all of Flanders had been subjected, and Amsterdam was on the point of surrender, when the King succumbed to his passion, left the army and hastily returned to Versailles, losing all he had won in his campaign. His second conquest of Franche-Comté in a way compensated for this, when he took command in person, for that province has since formed a part of France.

The King returned to Flanders in 1676 and took Condé with him. Soon afterwards he found himself faced by the army of the Prince of Orange, near Heurtebise, and it was a question whether the enemy's position should be assailed. Though Monsieur's [the King's brother] army, which was coming from Bouchain, had not yet arrived, the King's forces were superior to the enemy's, and the army was anxious to fight. A council of war was held on horseback. Louvois knew his master and had already spent two hours among the generals, persuading them to vote against taking the offensive. When the discussion began, he was the first to speak; he tried to intimidate the others. He was of opinion that a battle was undesirable. Marshals Humières and Schomberg, who did not wish to displease him, agreed. Marshal de la Feuillade, who spoke next, though he was not on good terms with Louvois, was a courtier, wise enough to be with the strongest. After some hesitation he also voted against attacking. Marshal de Lorge was the only one who dared speak his mind. He argued so ably against losing this favourable opportunity that Louvois and the other Marshals were unable to answer him. The generals of lower rank, though they were in agreement with M. de Lorge, dared not displease Louvois, and made evasive answers. The King who had up to then said nothing, put the matter to a vote. The majority were against attacking. He declared he was sorry to find the majority so set against fighting; but it was his duty to sacrifice his own inclinations for the good of the State. He rode off, and the matter was closed.

Marshal de Lorge, who told me the story himself (he was an absolutely trustworthy man) took occasion the next day to send a herald with a message to the enemy, who were then in full retreat. The Prince of Orange saw the man personally, and, before sending him away, ordered him to tell Marshal de Lorge that he had been right in voting for an attack. He

(the Prince) had never had such a fortunate escape in his life; he would have been defeated, and was now most thankful to have been allowed to retreat without giving battle. The herald, proud of this interview, repeated what he had been told not only to Marshal de Lorge but to anyone who would give ear. He told it even to the King, who had summoned him later.

This story naturally did not diminish the ill-temper of the army. Such a blunder caused an unpleasant impression, and occasioned ironic remarks against the King. He did not stay much longer with the army, although it was the end of May, but returned to his mistress. The next year Monsieur's behaviour at the siege of St. Omer formed a striking contrast with the King's on this occasion. The Prince of Orange went to the relief of the city, Monsieur advanced against him, and overthrew him in the vicinity of Cassel. The King was so deeply hurt by this contrast that he never again permitted his brother to command an army.

The war was ended by the Treaty of Nimwegen in 1678; and at the same time the most brilliant period of the King's reign. The second, as we shall see, was not so brilliant as the first, though it was a time of greater well-being than the last. It opened with the War of 1688, but the great generals and ministers had gone. Still, they left successors trained in their own traditions. I have already recounted the interesting story of the argument between the King and Louvois about a window at Trianon, which was the real cause of the war. Louvois, who was infuriated by a rebuke given him before witnesses, declared he would bring about a war in which the King could not dispense with his services. Within a few months he kept his word; he not only precipitated a war, but contrived (in spite of the King and the other countries) that it should involve all of Europe. It ruined the prosperity of France; in spite of many victories, our frontiers were not extended, and there were some disastrous occurrences, for one of which the King was personally responsible.

During the early part of June, 1693, the King had two powerful armies in Flanders, the one commanded by himself, the other, not far away, commanded by M. de Luxembourg. The Prince of Orange, whose army was far weaker, was some three miles off, in a bad position which he had fortified by hastily dug entrenchments. Nothing, it seemed, was easier for the King than to attack and carry the position with one army, while the other, in reserve, could follow after the defeated enemy. What might not be expected from a victory like this, at the very beginning of the campaign! The Prince of Orange considered his situation desperate. He wrote to his friend Vaudemont (in Brussels) that he considered it impossible to save his army. All three armies were thunderstruck when it was announced that the King was to retire, taking the greater part of his army for service in Italy and Germany. M. de Luxembourg knelt and implored him to reconsider, but to no purpose. The consternation in our camp was inde-

scribable; I was myself an eye-witness. Even the courtiers, as a rule so glad to have an excuse for returning home, could not restrain their anger. Disagreeable remarks were freely uttered.

The King left next day to join Mme. de Maintenon and the other ladies, returning to Versailles in their company. He was never again to be with an army, except at reviews. Six weeks afterward came the victory at Neerwinden, at which M. de Luxembourg, with an army considerably weaker than the King's, dislodged the enemy from a much stronger position, and proved what an opportunity had been lost on that other occasion. The Prince of Orange wrote to Vaudemont saying he had information (from one who had never hitherto deceived him) that the King was about to retire, but that he could not believe it. He remarked in a second letter that he found his information was correct, and could only assume that the King had been struck blind. It was to this circumstance he owed his deliverance. Vaudemont, who was afterwards so long at our Court, used to tell this story freely, sometimes even in the salon at Marly.

Some time before the end of that war, the King and his exhausted country longed for peace. Yet when it came the terms were humiliating. In order to separate the Duc de Savoie from his allies, it was necessary to accept his conditions; and the King, after showing such personal contempt for the Prince of Orange, had to recognise him as King of England and receive his ambassador. Because of undue haste and the ignorance of our counsellors, our frontiers were altered greatly, to the advantage of the enemy. Such was the Peace of Ryswick, which was signed in September, 1697. It lasted scarcely three years. With it ended the second period of Louis' reign. The third opened in great splendour. The King's grandson was put at the head of the Spanish realm without having to strike a blow. But this prosperity lasted only a short time, and was succeeded by a series of misfortunes that brought France almost to the brink of ruin. This period is, however, so close to our own times that I need not speak of it.

This brief summary of the King's reign was necessary to a proper understanding of the King's character. For the same purpose I may have to repeat some anecdotes which will be found here and there in the earlier parts of these *Memoirs*.

Let me repeat that the King's talents were not even mediocre, yet were capable of development. Glory was his passion; but he also liked order and form in all things. He was naturally careful, moderate, and reserved; invariably master of his words and emotions. And who will believe it? he was also kind-hearted and just. God had given him everything necessary for a good king, perhaps even a moderately great king. All his shortcomings were occasioned by his environment. As a child he was so neglected that no one ventured to go near his room. He often spoke of those days with great bitterness; and would tell how, through the carelessness of

his servants, he was found one evening in a fountain in the gardens of the Palais-Royal.

As time went on he was kept in complete dependence upon others. He was scarcely taught how to read and write, and remained ignorant of the commonest events of history; of the laws of his country, of the history of the men of his time, their deeds and birth, he knew nothing. Because of this ignorance he often made ridiculous blunders. M. de la Feuillade once said in his presence that it was unfortunate that the Marquis de Renel had not been made a Knight of the Order in the promotion of 1661; and the King, somewhat displeased, said that he must consider what was due to himself. Renel was a Clermont-Gallerande, yet the King had imagined he was self-made. Later on he was by no means so sensitive in similar cases. Montglat, who was given the Order in 1661, belonged to the same family, having married a granddaughter of the Chancellor de Cheverny; his only son took the name of Cheverny, which he had inherited with the estate. He lived all his life at Court, except when he was on diplomatic missions. Yet the King, who was deceived by the name of Cheverny, imagined he was not of good family, and would never give him a Court appointment or admit him to the Order. It was not until toward the end of his life that the King learned who he really was. Similarly Saint-Hérem, master of the hounds and governor of Fontainebleau, was never able to secure the Order: the King knew he was a brother-in-law of Courtin, State Counsellor, and therefore believed he was a man of low degree. But he was a Montmorin, as M. de Rochefoucauld told the King later. It was necessary to explain to him who these great families were; their names meant nothing to him.

It might be thought that he held the higher nobility in great esteem and did not wish to see its privileges belittled, but nothing could be further from the truth. His ministers, from selfish motives, hated and belittled honours to which they could never aspire, and the King, who sympathised with them, had been so far influenced by them that he distrusted nobility of birth as much as he did nobility of mind, and if any man possessed both, and the King knew it, he was never given an opportunity.

His ministers, mistresses, generals, and courtiers soon learned to know his weak point: his love of hearing himself praised. He liked nothing so much as flattery or, to put it more plainly, adulation; the more obvious and apparent it was, the more he enjoyed it. Flattery was the only means of approaching him; if he ever took a fancy to a man it was due to some lucky stroke of flattery at first, and to unremitting perseverance afterwards. His ministers owed a great deal of their influence to their many opportunities for burning incense before him; suppleness, self-effacement, the attribution of all they knew to his influence, these were the only sure methods of pleasing him. If one of these men ever departed from this

procedure, that was the end of him. This was what finally brought about the ruin of Louvois. It is remarkable how deeply this poison had penetrated the mind of a ruler who was not without sense, and had wide experience of men. Though he had neither voice nor ear for music, he used (in private) to sing parts of operatic prologues composed in his honour. It was easy to perceive that he relished this sort of flattery. Even when eating in public, if his orchestra played those same songs, he would sing the words quietly to himself.

Because of this love of praise, it was easy for Louvois to embroil him in wars, for he persuaded him that he had a greater genius for war than his generals, both in the plan and in the execution. The generals themselves (Condé and Turenne, for example) encouraged him in this notion, in order to keep in favour with him; this was even more strikingly evident with those who succeeded them. He attributed to himself most complacently the credit for their successes and really believed all that his flatterers told him. This was the reason for his fondness for reviews, which he carried to such an extent that his enemies called him the King of Reviews; likewise his liking for sieges, where he was able to make a cheap show of bravery, and exhibit his care, forethought, and power to endure hardship; for his strong constitution enabled him to stand excessive fatigue. Neither hunger, nor heat, nor cold, nor bad weather meant much to him. As he rode through the lines he liked to hear people praise his dignified bearing and splendid appearance on horseback. His wars were a favourite subject of conversation when he was with his mistresses. He spoke well, and expressed himself clearly in choice language. No one could tell a story better. Even on ordinary subjects, his conversation was always distinguished by a natural dignity.

His mind was taken up with small things rather than with great, and he enjoyed every kind of pettiness, like the uniforms and drill of his soldiers. So it was with his building operations, the management of his household, and even the affairs of the kitchen. He thought he could always teach something about their own business even to the most skilful professional men; they, for their part, would listen gratefully to lessons they had long since learned by heart. He had a notion that this showed his tireless industry; whereas, it was really a great waste of time, but his ministers made use of it for their own ends as soon as they had learned how to manage him. They kept his attention focussed on the details, while they managed to get their own way in the more important things.

His vanity, which was continually fed (even the clergy praised him to his face in the pulpit), explains the advancement of his ministers. He thought that they were great only because of him, that they were only the means by which he expressed his desires. Hence he did not object when they gradually arrogated to themselves the privileges of the highest nobility. He thought that he could at any time reduce them to the obscure

positions they once occupied; whereas, though he could make a noble feel his displeasure, he could not deprive him or his family of the position that was his by right of birth. Therefore he never admitted a great noble to his councils; to this rule the Duc de Beauvilliers was the one exception.

His ministers were constantly seeking to prevent anyone's approaching him except through themselves. He took considerable satisfaction in thinking that he was accessible and willing to listen to anyone. A great noble might speak to him freely when he returned from Mass or passed from one room to another; or he might even attend him at the door of his private room, though he dared not follow him in. This was the extent of his accessibility. It was not possible to say more than a few words to him, and these were overheard by all who were near him. If one were on a more familiar footing, one might whisper into his wig, but this was scarcely more satisfactory. He invariably answered, "I will see about it." This was a convenient way to gain time, but as a result every petition or complaint was turned over to his ministers. He rarely granted an audience in his private chamber, but if anyone could obtain it and knew how to behave himself properly, he could gain by it, which my own experience proves.

It will be recalled that I almost forced the King, on several occasions when he was much displeased with me, to grant me an audience; and that on each occasion I managed to pacify him, so that he expressed his satisfaction to others besides myself. He invariably listened, no matter what prejudices he might have, with an evident desire to learn the truth. If he interrupted, it was only for that purpose. One might say anything to him, if it was with an air of profound respect and submission. Otherwise one would fall into worse disgrace than ever; but, if one was respectful, one might venture to interrupt, even to contradict the statements he quoted, even to speak louder than he; he not only allowed such liberties without taking offence but, when the audience was over, declared he was happy to have been corrected, and showed his satisfaction by kind treatment. For this reason his ministers always did their utmost to dissuade him from granting audiences of this kind.

His education had unfortunately been designed, it seemed, to narrow his intelligence and crush the naturally kind impulses of his affection. The poison of flattery, so carefully administered, not only intoxicated him with a consciousness of his glory and might, it nearly destroyed his sense of justice and love for the truth. From that poisoned source he developed a pride so excessive that he would have made himself an object of worship as a god if he had not, thank Heaven! been afraid, even in his wildest excesses, of the devil. Nor would he have lacked worshippers, as may be perceived by the exaggerated inscriptions on his monuments and the pagan formalities at the dedication of his statue in the Place des Victoires. This gave him the utmost pleasure, as I can personally testify.

By cleverly working on the King's pride, Louvois managed to engage

him in many wars, thus establishing his own extraordinary authority. Though he was never called Prime Minister, he in time overcame all his rivals and secured a position in which he was actually the head of the State. To his great pleasure he survived his enemies, Colbert and Seignelay; but this was not to last long. The decline and fall of this famous minister are matters too curious to be omitted: I cannot find a better place for a relation of them than here.

I was quite young at the time, but I learned all the facts from persons so unprejudiced and truthful that I do not hesitate to relate them as absolutely trustworthy.

As we saw in the story about the window, Louvois was not always in complete control of his temper. He ardently wished to increase the King's power and glory because, if for no further reason, he saw in them a warrant for his own position and authority. He so insinuated himself into the King's confidence that he was told the secret of the latter's approaching marriage to Mme. de Maintenon, and was one of the two witnesses of that shameful ceremony. He was brave enough to advise the King what a disgrace such a union would be to him if it were publicly announced, and extorted from him a solemn promise never to publish it, no matter what happened, and even persuaded him to repeat the promise, in his presence, to Archbishop Harlay of Paris, whose attendance at the ceremony was necessary, since there were no banns or other formalities. He spared himself no expense to keep himself informed, and some years afterwards learned that Mme. de Maintenon had induced the King to promise her that the marriage should be made public, and that it would be announced immediately. He summoned the Archbishop at once to Versailles; took papers as an excuse, and entered the private rooms. The King was about to go for his afternoon walk, but seeing Louvois at that unusual hour, asked what had brought him. "Something most important and urgent," declared Louvois in a tone so grave that it surprised the King, who sent away the valets. They retired, but left open the door so that they were able to overhear what was said. They could also see in the looking-glass what went on. That was one of the disadvantages of those private rooms.

Louvois then explained the reason of his visit. The King could on occasion be hypocritical, but disliked telling positive untruths. When he saw that Louvois knew the facts, he made a feeble attempt to avoid making a direct answer, and went to the door of the room where the valets stood. Perceiving this, Louvois knelt at his feet, embraced his knees and, drawing the little sword he wore, offered it to his master, begging him to kill him forthwith if he intended to break his promise, for he would not see him disgrace himself before all Europe by publicly announcing his marriage. The King tried to escape and ordered Louvois to leave, but Louvois grasped his knees still tighter and eventually induced him by entreaties to promise again that the marriage should not be announced.

During the evening the Archbishop came, and Louvois told him what he had done. The cleric could not himself have done so noble a deed — for so it must be called, since the minister knew he was making an enemy of Mme. de Maintenon if she found out what he had done — and he could hardly refuse to stand by Louvois. He spoke to the King next day and easily secured a confirmation of his promise.

Mme. de Maintenon was every day expecting to be declared Queen, but after a short time she grew nervous and ventured to remind the King of his promise. His obvious embarrassment frightened her; she made a last appeal which he interrupted by telling her in as kindly a manner as possible that he had thought it all over and must ask her never to refer to it again. After the first disappointment, she began trying to find out what had caused it and, having sources of information as good as those of Louvois, she soon learned what had happened. She determined, of course, to have revenge; but time had to elapse in order to still the King's suspicions before she took steps against a minister who was so necessary at that time, while the war was going on. Meanwhile she lost no chance of weakening his position. The burning of the Palatinate district gave her an admirable opportunity. She spoke to the King about the cruelty of it, appealing to his religious feelings, to which he was more susceptible than he afterwards became, and reminded him that the terrible hatred it aroused would be concentrated upon himself, and not upon Louvois. And it might have dangerous consequences. By continually insisting on this, she managed to produce an unfavourable impression on the King.

Not content with the devastation of the Palatinate, Louvois wanted to set fire to Trèves as well, and told the King that it was yet more needful than what had been done at Worms and Spire, since Trèves was more dangerous as a centre for the enemy's operations than the other places. But the King would not agree, and Mme. de Maintenon made the most of it. Some days later Louvois, who was used to having his own way, came again on business with the King and as usual sat in Mme. de Maintenon's rooms. After the conference was over he told the King that he knew his religious scruples had prevented his permitting a thing so necessary as the burning of Trèves; he had therefore taken the responsibility on himself, and sent a courier with orders to burn it at once. The King was so angry that he rose, seized the tongs and would have struck Louvois, when Mme. de Maintenon threw herself between them, crying, "Sire! what are you doing!"

Meantime Louvois started for the door. The King recalled him, his eyes blazing with anger, and said: "Send a courier at once with counter-orders; and see that he arrives in time. If a single house is burnt, you will answer for it with your head!" In terror Louvois left immediately. He was not afraid that the counter-order would arrive too late, since the order itself had never been sent. He had believed that the King might be angry but after hearing that the order had been given, would agree without too much

difficulty. He had given the courier his orders and told him to be ready to start at any time. He had not dared to send him. He got back his despatches; and the King always believed that the countermand had saved Trèves.

After this Mme. de Maintenon's way was easy. The downfall of Louvois was eventually caused by the advice he gave the King to leave the ladies behind when he went to lay siege to Mons in the spring of 1691. Chamlay, who knew the military secrets, warned him not to suggest a thing that would set Mme. de Maintenon against him; but the finances, which were good compared with what they were later, were already bad enough. Louvois, disregarding his danger, objected to the foolish expense and embarrassment caused by the ladies at the seat of war. They therefore remained at Versailles. The King captured Mons, and came back immediately after.

It was a trifling thing during the siege that brought about Louvois' ruin. The King, who took pride in his knowledge of military details, came one day to a cavalry guard which he thought was in the wrong position, and therefore moved it to a different place. The captain told him that Louvois had given the order. "But," said the King, "did you not inform him that I chose the place myself?" "Yes, Sire," answered the captain. The King turned to his officers and said: "Is that not just like Louvois? He thinks he knows everything; among other things, that he is a good soldier!" He at once ordered the guard back where he had put them before. It was a foolish impertinence on Louvois' part, and what the King said was true, but he never forgot it. Years later, when he summoned Pomponne to his council, he told him the incident, and seemed to be still angry at Louvois' presumptuousness. I heard the story from Pomponne.

After he returned from Mons the King's dislike became so evident that Louvois began to feel uneasy. The Maréchale de Rochefort and her daughter Mme. de Blansac dined with him one day at Meudon, and afterwards he took them for a drive in a carriage, holding the reins himself. He seemed much preoccupied, and they heard him muttering: "Would he do it? Can they make him? No, not yet. He would not dare!" He was still driving on, when suddenly the Maréchale perceived that the horses had come to the edge of a lake, and was barely able to seize the reins and avoid an accident. Louvois seemed to come suddenly to himself, stopped the carriage and turned around. He then admitted that he was not thinking of what he was doing. Both the ladies told me this.

Shortly after, on July 16th, I was at Versailles attending to a dispute between my father, then at Blaye, and Sourdis, Commandant in Guyenne. The King had decided in favour of my father, though against Louvois' advice. In spite of this, I was advised to thank Louvois; he received me as politely as though he had taken my father's part. Such is Court life! I had never exchanged a word with him before. That afternoon I heard he

had been taken sick while conversing with the King; and had just time to go to his own rooms, where he died. His son, Barbésieux, who was sent for, arrived too late to see him alive.

The shock of this news at Court may easily be conceived. I was barely fifteen at the time, but I wished to see how the King behaved after so important an event. I therefore waited until he came out and followed him in the garden. He was dignified as usual, but I noticed something in his manner that showed his relief. This surprised me so much (I did not know then the circumstances I have just been describing) that I mentioned it later to other people. I also noticed that instead of going another way to see his fountains, as usual, he kept walking to and fro along the orangery, and as he turned toward the *château*, he saw the house where Louvois had just died, and kept looking at it. There was no mention of the recent event before an officer came from St. Germain with a message of condolence to the King from the King of England. "Present my thanks and best compliments to the King and Queen of England," said the King, in a casual manner, "and inform them that neither their affairs nor mine will suffer through what has happened." The officer bowed and left, much astonished. I watched this scene with deep interest, and noticed that the chief personages there exchanged meaningful glances, without saying a word.

The suddenness of Louvois' death aroused considerable comment, above all when it was known that a post-mortem had brought to light traces of poison. Louvois was a great water-drinker, and always had water on the mantel in his room. It was known that he had drunk this water just before going to the King; also that the man who polished his floors had entered his room before he went there to take the papers he was going to discuss with the King, and had been there alone for a short interval. The man was arrested, but he had not been in jail more than four days when he was released by order of the King. The report of the inquiry was burned, and all further proceedings dropped. It was dangerous to talk about the affair, and Louvois' family went to such pains to stop all gossip that it was clear they were acting under strict orders.

The physician's account, which came out a few months later, was also silenced so far as possible; but I heard by chance all about it from a reliable person. It is too singular to be left out of this notice of the famous minister. My father had an equerry of the name of Clérand, a gentleman by birth and a man of honour, who left him to serve under Louvois. This was two or three years before his death. Clérand was always very friendly, and often visited us. He remained with Mme. de Louvois after Louvois' death. He informed me that four or five months after that event, Seron, his physician, suddenly locked himself into his room, where he uttered loud cries; but refused to open the door or to receive assistance, temporal or spiritual. Finally he was heard to exclaim that he had got

only what he deserved for treating his master as he had; that he was a monster, unworthy to live. But he did not mention anyone by name.

Who committed the crime? The question has never been answered. In order to honour his memory, Louvois' friends used to suspect some foreign power; but if any government did conceive such a ghastly idea, it waited until very late to carry it into execution. One thing is certain: the King was himself above committing such a crime. It never occurred to anyone to suspect him.

Louvois' death occurred just in time to prevent a great scandal, for he was to have been sent to the Bastille the next day. What would have resulted must always remain a mystery. That the King had come to this decision is beyond all doubt. I learned it from several well-informed persons, but what makes it doubly sure is that I heard it from Chamillart, to whom the King confided it. This explains, I think, the King's relief on hearing of Louvois' death: he was happy at being spared the necessity of doing what he had resolved to do next day, with all its disagreeable consequences.

Early during Louis XIV's reign the Court was removed from Paris, whither it was not to return. The troubles he had during his minority had instilled in him a dislike of the city; his enforced and secret escape from it still rankled in his memory; he did not deem himself safe there, and believed plots would be more easily discovered if the Court were in the country, where the changes of residence and short absences of anyone would be easily noticed. He did not like to be stared at whenever he went out or came in, or to be surrounded by crowds when he appeared in the street. Besides, he was annoyed by many persons of another class that came to the Court when it was at Paris. These would be unable to come if the Court were removed some distance away. These reasons, together with his fondness for hunting and the passion for building which soon developed in him, and which he could not follow so well in a city, led him to settle at St. Germain shortly after the death of the Queen-mother. He was also doubtless influenced by the consideration that he would be looked upon with greater awe were he not daily exposed to the gaze of the people.

His liaison with Mlle. de la Vallière, at first concealed so far as possible under a veil of mystery, caused him to go often to Versailles, at that time a small country lodge, built by Louis XIII to avoid the necessity, under which he had occasionally fallen, of sleeping at a poor inn or in a windmill, after nightfall when out hunting in the forest of St. Léger; hunting in those times was not what it is now, what with convenient roads, better hounds, and beaters, which have diminished the extent of the chase and made it easier to keep up. Louis XIII rarely spent more than a single night at Versailles, and then only from necessity. It was quite otherwise with his son, who went there to be alone with his mistress. That was something un-

known to the heroic, just and worthy descendant of St. Louis. Louis XIV's visits became more frequent, so that he gradually enlarged the *château* until its rambling buildings gave better accommodations to the Court than were to be had at St. Germain, where most of the people of the Court had to manage with uncomfortable lodgings in the village. The Court therefore removed to Versailles, in 1682, shortly before the Queen's death. The new building contained a vast number of rooms for courtiers, which the King liked to assign as a special favour.

He made use of the many festivities at Versailles and elsewhere in order to make the courtiers assiduous in their attendance and desirous of pleasing him; he learned beforehand those who were to participate, thus gratifying some and slighting others. He knew that the real favours he had to give were not numerous enough to be permanently effective, and was hence driven to invent imaginary favours. There was no one more ingenious in devising minor distinctions and preferences, and these caused jealousy and aroused emulation. His visits to Marly in later years were very useful to him in this way, as well as those to Trianon, where certain ladies, designated beforehand, were allowed to sit at table with him. It was considered a favour also to hold the candlestick at his *coucher*. When he had finished his prayers, he would name the courtier who was to receive it, always choosing one of the highest rank.

The so-called *justaucorps-à-brevet* was another invention of the sort. This was a blue coat with red facings, heavily embroidered with gold. The number of those permitted to wear it was strictly limited; even members of the Royal family were forced to wait until a vacancy occurred. It was in the first instance granted solely to those who were allowed to accompany the King on his journeys from St. Germain to Versailles without being asked, but after the trips had ceased, the possession of the coat implied no honour beyond that of wearing it, which anyone might do when in mourning, or when the wearing of gold or silver lace was forbidden. I never saw the King himself wear it, nor Monseigneur, nor Monsieur; but his grandsons the Princes often did so, and until the King's death the most important persons at Court would strive for the honour whenever a vacancy occurred. If the favour were granted to a young man, it was looked upon as a special distinction.

He required all distinguished persons to be continually at Court, and noticed at once if those of lower degree were not present at his *lever*, his *coucher*, or during his meals. In the gardens at Versailles (where alone his courtiers were allowed to accompany him) he used to look about in all directions. Nothing escaped his notice, for he saw everyone. If any who lived at Court were away, he demanded the reason, and those who came only for a short visit had to give a proper explanation. Those who rarely or never came were certain of his disfavour. When he was asked to grant a favour to any such person, he would answer haughtily, "I do not know

him." Regarding those who rarely presented themselves, he would say, "I never see him." There was no appeal.

It was also a crime not to go with the Court to Fontainebleau; he regarded the place as he did Versailles; and persons of a certain rank were expected to beg permission to go to Marly, often or every time he went there, even if he had no idea of taking them. He especially disliked people who spent their time in Paris. He was more lenient toward those who liked to live on their estates, but they must not remain there too much of the time. If they intended to make a long sojourn in the country it was better to be prepared beforehand. The King's watchfulness was not confined to persons with Court appointments or those in favour with him. If one who usually lived at Court was away, the King asked the reason why. We have already seen how quickly he noticed a trip I took to Rouen to see about my lawsuit there. Though I was young, he had Pontchartrain write me for an explanation.

He always went to great trouble to find out what was happening in society, in private homes; he pried even into personal secrets. He maintained a large number of spies, of which there were many kinds: some did not know that their tales were carried to him; others did; while there were still others who wrote to him direct through channels which he carefully prepared. There were others, again, who were admitted secretly and saw him in his private room. Many men of all ranks were ruined in this way, often very unjustly, without discovering the reason. When the King had once conceived a prejudice against anyone, he rarely gave it up. He possessed a very dangerous defect, harmful to himself and to others, since it often resulted in depriving him of useful subjects. He had a wonderful memory: he could recognise a common man he had not seen for twenty years, and remember everything he had ever heard about him. Yet he heard and saw so much that he could not possibly remember it all in detail. Therefore, when asked to appoint someone to a certain station, he would occasionally recall that he had heard something about him, though he could not exactly remember what it was; this was enough to make him refuse, and no arguments from a minister, a general, even from his confessor, made any impression upon him. The King would reply that, though he could not recollect precisely what he had heard about the applicant, it was wiser to appoint a man of whom he had heard nothing at all.

The Lieutenants of Police owed their great influence to the King's curiosity. People feared them more than they did the ministers, and they were greatly respected. Even the ministers feared them. There was not a man in France, including the Princes, who did not make an effort to keep on good terms with them. Besides reports on serious matters furnished by them to the King, he was amused to hear all about the gallant love-intrigues and adventures which went on in Paris. Pontchartrain, who had Paris and the Court under his jurisdiction, used to seek the royal favour

in this shameful way, much to his father's disgust. But this was the one thing that saved him from dismissal.

The most inexcusable means employed by the King to obtain information was the opening of letters. This began many years before anyone suspected it. It is hard to imagine how quickly and cleverly the process was accomplished. The King read parts of all letters that the officials and the minister over the post-office deemed important enough to be shown him, and occasionally he saw the letters themselves. Hence, the officials could bring an accusation against anyone at all; it was not even necessary to imagine a serious plot; a trifle was enough; a joke, an ill-considered phrase about the King or his officers, a phrase apart from its context, was enough to bring ruin upon the writer. Many a man, of whatever rank, was lost by having uttered some disloyal sentiment. The whole thing was surrounded with secrecy; this was easy for the King, to whom silence and hypocrisy came naturally. His talent for dissimulation was notable; yet he never told a deliberate falsehood, and took pride in always keeping his promise. This is why he seldom made promises. He kept others' secrets as carefully as he kept his own, and was highly flattered by receiving confidences. In cases of that sort neither mistress, nor minister, nor favourite could get a hint out of him, even when the secret concerned themselves.

For example, let me mention the adventure of a lady of high rank, whose name was never known, nor even suspected. She found herself pregnant after she had been separated for more than a year from her husband, who was ready to return from the army. She went to the King and begged him to grant her a private audience. He acceded to her request, and she told her story, declaring that she had come to him as the most honourable and discreet man in the kingdom. He said he trusted this would be a warning to her, but gave his word to keep the husband busy at the frontier until all fear of discovery should be past. That day he told Louvois to appoint the husband to the command of a certain place, with orders not to absent himself for a single day. The husband, an officer of high rank, was astonished to find himself appointed to a command he had not asked for, on the frontier during the winter months, and which he did not want. He could get no explanation from Louvois, and could only obey orders. The King told this anecdote himself, though not until long after, when he was sure that none concerned in it could be identified. As a matter of fact, no one could ever discover the slightest clue.

Louis XIV understood, as few others could, the art of increasing the value of a favour by his manner of granting it. He could make the most of a word, or a smile, even a glance. When he spoke to anyone, if only to ask an unimportant question or make an ordinary remark, every eye was turned toward the person so honoured. It was a special favour which always occasioned talk. Never did he say anything that hurt one's feelings; if he had to reprove or reprimand anyone, which rarely happened, it

was always done in a considerate manner. Sometimes he spoke severely, but seldom harshly, and never in anger, save in Courtenvaux's case, which I have told in its proper place.

No one was ever more polite, or realized what was due to the age, worth or quality of the person he was speaking to. This was marked by a slight variation in manner, in his replies when they were other than the usual "I will see about it," and in his manner of receiving or making a bow. It was wonderful to see him returning, with such slight variations, the salutes of the various regiments at a review. With women in particular his politeness was remarkable: he never passed a woman without raising his hat, even when he met a serving maid, as often happened at Marly. He removed his hat to a born lady with more or less of a flourish, depending upon her rank. If he spoke, he never replaced it until the conversation was at an end. To a nobleman he raised his hand to his hat; to a royal Prince he took his hat off as he did to a lady. This was out of doors: he never wore his hat within. His bows (always slight, marked according to the circumstances) were very charming and dignified; likewise his manner when he rose halfway from his chair at supper when a lady came in who was to be seated. He never behaved thus for other ladies or even for the royal Princes. This custom he always followed; ladies entitled to be seated were careful when later on it tired him, not to come in after supper had begun.

He always waited patiently if there was any delay in bringing something to him while dressing. He was very punctual in adhering to the programme for the day. When he could not go out on some disagreeable winter day, he went to Mme. de Maintenon's rooms fifteen minutes earlier than usual, and if the Captain of the Guard was not ready for him, he invariably told him that he was not to blame, that it was his own fault for coming too soon. Because of this regularity, affairs were conducted with admirable precision, which was a great convenience to the people of the Court. He was kind to servants, especially to the valets. He felt at his ease with them and talked most familiarly. Their good-will or hatred often occasioned important results; they were able to do a favour or a disservice, since their position was like that of those powerful freed-men in the service of the Roman Emperors, toward whom the Senators and other important men found it necessary to behave in a servile manner. Ministers, royal Princes, even the illegitimate sons of the King, had to pay court to the valets. For this reason most of them were haughty; one had simply to keep out of their way, or bear their insolence with a good grace.

The King used always to take their side and would relate how when a young man he had sent a servant with a letter to M. de Montbazon, Governor of Paris, then staying at his estate nearby. M. de Montbazon had forced the servant to sit down to dinner with him and accompanied

him all the way to the courtyard, because he was the King's servant. When he sent one of his gentlemen-in-waiting to congratulate or condole with some person of rank (he never sent messages to others), he took pains to ask for details of his reception; and he would have been much displeased to learn that the man who received the message had not seen the messenger to his carriage.

Until he was no longer able to indulge in them he was fond of exercises, especially out-of-doors. He had once been a good dancer and an excellent tennis player. When he was well advanced in years he was admirable on horseback. He was pleased to see such things well done by others; and if anyone did poorly in his presence, he was displeased, saying that such accomplishments were not really necessary, and if a man could not excel in them he had better not try them at all. He liked to shoot; there was no better shot in the country. He always had the best hunting dogs, of which there were always seven or eight in his rooms. He liked to feed them himself, in order that they might know him. He also liked to hunt the stag, though after he broke his arm at Fontainebleau he used to go to the hunt driving four small horses to a carriage. He drove at full speed, handling the reins more cleverly and gracefully than the best coachman. Everything he did was done with grace. His postillions were boys from nine to fourteen years old, whom he directed himself.

He was inordinately fond of splendour, magnificence, and abundance in all things, and stimulated similar tastes at Court. Spending money freely on festivals and buildings, banqueting and gambling, was a sure way to gain favour, even the honour of a word from him. He did this to a certain extent with an end in view; by making expensive habits fashionable and (for people of rank) necessary, he made his courtiers live beyond their income, and in time forced them to depend on his generosity in order to exist. This system became a plague to the entire kingdom: it did not take long to spread to Paris, and then to the armies and into the provinces; so that a man of important rank is now valued according to his expenditure on food and other luxuries. This madness of pride and ostentation has already brought about universal confusion, threatening to end in general ruin.

No king before him ever had anything approaching the magnificence of Louis XIV's establishments for hunting and other amusements. Who could remember all the buildings he erected? And who can fail to regret their ostentation and vulgarity? Except for the Pont-Royal, which he was forced to build, he added nothing to the beauty or convenience of Paris, which remains very inferior to several other European cities. When the Place Vendôme was first planned it was to have been square; Louvois intended the buildings for the royal library, the academies, and other public institutions, but after his death the King ordered that the Place should have nothing but dwelling houses, and also made it smaller by building across the corners. This is how it stands now.

St. Germain was one town among thousands; beautifully situated in the midst of majestic trees, with a vista commanding a wide forest and the windings of the river, there was plenty of space for gardens with elevated terraces. There was also a town which had grown naturally, and it was possible to come and go by the river. This charming place, suitable for the Court, the King abandoned for Versailles, of all places the least worth spending money upon. It lies in a most unattractive position, without trees or water; the soil is marshy and sandy, and the air unhealthy. But the King took pleasure in forcing Nature and subjecting her by artifice and wasteful expenditure.

The castle was built bit by bit, without any general design, so that fine buildings were just added to poor ones already standing. The great extent of some contrasts badly with the scantiness of others. The private apartments are most inconvenient, and the rooms look out into small, dark, odorous courts. The gardens are also mean and vulgar. Their magnificence amazes one at first, but after a short time they become intolerable. One has first to cross a wide unshaded desert in order to seek shade, and then go down and up again; at the end of the slope, which is short, the gardens suddenly end. The sand burns the feet; yet without it they would sink, here into sand, there into mud. Water has been carried to the gardens at great pains and expense. It is green and muddy and, besides making the place damp, its odor is foul. When the fountains run (which is rarely, because of the cost) the effect is incomparable; but on the whole, one admires the gardens and avoids them.

Seen from the yard the castle looks mean; there is a lack of spaciousness that positively oppresses: the great wings in either direction seem not to belong to the main building. It is possible to appreciate the front from the gardens, but the building resembles a palace the roof and upper part of which have been destroyed by fire and not rebuilt. It seems weighed down by the roof of the chapel, which looks like a large coffin. This was done on purpose by Mansart, who wanted the King to raise the whole building one storey. The decoration of the chapel is exquisite, but the general effect inside is disappointing. It was planned to be seen from the gallery, because the King rarely visited the ground-floor. The side-boxes are very inconvenient, since each has a separate passageway.

There is no need to enumerate all the shortcomings of this great and costly castle. Vast and costly though it is, its surroundings were even more so: orangeries, vegetable gardens, kennels, two immense stables called the Great and the Small (exactly the same size), and a considerable town, which grew up where there was originally nothing but a poor inn, a windmill, and the little lodge built by Louis XIII. This consisted only of the low buildings about the Marble Court, with two small wings. My father saw it, and slept there often. This Versailles of Louis XIV, this extravagant monument of bad taste, was never finished! With all its salons

opening one into the other, it has no theatre, no banqueting-hall, no ballroom; on both façades of the building much remains to be done. The park, the woods and lanes, all fitted out with young trees, do not seem to flourish. Game does not multiply; there would be none at all if it were not always brought there for the occasion. In a word, the interminable walls include a small province of the most idiotic and melancholy country in the world.

Trianon, which is in the park, was at first a little house intended for refreshments. It was later enlarged by the addition of bedrooms, and at last was made into a palace of marble, jasper, and porphyry, with charming gardens. Opposite it, at the end of the canal, was the *Ménagerie*, a building adorned with delicate trifles, full of many sorts of rare birds and animals. Clagny, which was built for Mme. de Montespan and afterwards belonged to M. du Maine [illegitimate son of the King] was another fine castle near Versailles, with a beautiful park, gardens, and fountains.

The marvels of Asia and of the ancient world are surpassed at Versailles; so many rare and beautiful things have seldom been seen in one place: the most exquisite marbles, pictures, and sculptures abound. Unfortunately, Versailles lacked water; and the fountains, marvellous works of art, were usually dry, as they are today, though millions were spent in making spacious reservoirs in that soil of sand and mud.

This lack of water was, strangely enough, the ruin of our army. Mme. de Maintenon was at the height of her ascendancy. In order to please her, Louvois planned to divert the Eure between Chartres and Maintenon, and divert it to Versailles. He persevered in this scheme for several years, but at what great cost, not only in money but in human life! A large camp was established, and the soldiers put to work. But a disease came from the newly turned soil and spread a fever among them, and so many died that it was forbidden to refer to it; and a large number of those who did not die never recovered their health. Still the camp was not abandoned, and all officers were forbidden to leave it even for a day. The work was interrupted by the war of 1688, and never taken up again. Nothing remains of the venture save unsightly ruins, which bear everlasting witness to a cruel folly.

The King ultimately wearied of his splendour in public, and thought he would like to have a small palace where he could occasionally enjoy a little quiet. He looked for a good place in the neighbourhood; and he inspected the heights overlooking the meadows where the Seine winds about outside Paris, and waters so much fertile country and so many flourishing towns. He was advised to choose Luciennes, where Cavoye later built a house with a beautiful view; but his answer was that so delightful a situation would ruin him; he wanted a small place where he would not be tempted to build a large house. Near Luciennes he discovered a small valley, inaccessible because of the marshes, enclosed by the hills, on one

slope of which stood a small village called Marly. What pleased him most were the absence of any view and the impossibility of having one. Its situation, which seemed to make extensive buildings impossible, was an additional advantage. He selected Marly, intending first to spend there only two or three nights a year, with no one save a dozen courtiers and the most indispensable servants. The preliminary work of draining this place and bringing new earth was considerable, for all the rubbish of the neighbourhood had from time immemorial been dumped there.

Gradually the place was enlarged; the terraces were dug away to give more space; the hill was almost entirely removed to give some sort of view; gardens were planned and made, and a park as well; waterworks and aqueducts were constructed; works of art, statues, and furniture were brought, and Marly became what we now see it, though much has been taken away since the King's death. Woods were planted, with full-grown trees brought from Compiègne; three-fourths of these died, and had to be replaced. The King was always making alterations, at great cost. I myself saw a large wood transformed within six weeks into a pond where people rode in gondolas. This was scarcely accomplished when the lake was turned into a forest again, with such large trees that they kept out the light of day. The fountains and waterfalls were transported here and there a hundred times; carp-basins, decorated with gilt and beautiful paintings, were no sooner finished than they were taken elsewhere, with new decorations by the same painters. Such things happened again and again. One could safely say that, taking all this into consideration, with the expense of the prodigious device for raising water known as the Marly machine, with its immense conduits, aqueducts, and reservoirs, Versailles itself cost not so much as Marly. Such was the place that was originally covered with refuse, the haunt of frogs, toads, and snakes, chosen in the first instance because it was impossible to spend much money upon it. The King's bad taste and haughty pride in overcoming natural difficulties is well exemplified at Marly, and neither the most serious war nor his conversion to religion was ever able to change him.

After these examples of self-will and unrestricted power I refer to another thing, more natural perhaps, but more disastrous: the King's love-affairs. All Europe was shocked by them, and in France they created deep and lasting ill effects. It was doubtless because of this that the divine vengeance brought the King to the edge of the chasm and with one exception killed off his descendants. The first "regular" mistress he had was Mlle. de la Vallière. It is regrettable that his other mistresses were not like her. Quiet, modest, and unselfish, she gave herself up to a genuine love; she was ashamed of her weakness and of its results, the children, who were acknowledged much against her will. At last, after suffering tortures of jealousy, she betook herself from Court and devoted her life to pious penitence.

Even while Mlle. de la Vallière held sway, the King was attracted by the beauty of Mme. de Montespan, who begged her husband to take her away to Guyenne. This was done in good faith, but in his blind stupidity, her husband refused to listen. Finally she yielded to the King, who affected a separation between her and her husband. He then outraged public opinion in Europe by appearing at reviews, and even with the army during battles, with two mistresses at once, who were seated in the Queen's carriage. The masses, in their simplicity, used to call them the "three Queens," and point to them. Mme. de Montespan became the supreme mistress of the King and Court. To make the scandal worse, M. de Montespan was sent to the Bastille, and then exiled to Guyenne, while his wife was made Superintendent of the Queen's Household, a place which was made vacant by the resignation of the Comtesse de Soissons, which entitled her to a *tabouret* in the presence of the King. She could not be created a Duchess, since she was married. No effort was made to conceal the birth of her children. Her rooms became the centre of the Court amusements, the place whither ministers and generals turned with fear or expectation, and the public humiliation of the realm. Her sisters came to live with her.

The Queen of Abbesses, fairer and wittier than Mme. de Montespan, was wont to leave her cloister at Fontevault occasionally to share her splendour, and was invited to the King's most exclusive gatherings. These visits never impaired her reputation. It may be said that, except for the strangeness of a person wearing such a costume coming to enjoy such favours, they occasioned no comment whatever. She was the ablest of the three women—very learned, skilled in theology, and familiar with the writings of the Fathers and the Bible. She knew Latin and Greek; though her wit was apparent, no one would have imagined that she knew more than the average woman. She was skilled in the art of management; she kept her abbey in strict order, yet she was loved by her nuns. She had become a nun against her will, yet her reputation as abbess was quite secure.

The third sister, Mme. de Thianges, amused the King more even than the others, and probably exercised greater influence over him; for even after Mme. de Montespan was sent from Court she enjoyed many distinguished privileges.

Mme. de Montespan was ill-natured, bad-tempered, and unreliable, with an overbearing pride from which the King was no more exempt than anyone else. The people of the Court passed her windows as seldom as possible, above all when the King was with her: they called this "being under fire," an expression which became proverbial. She was merciless toward all, often with no other motive than of amusing the King. She was witty and sarcastic, and it was hazardous to incur her ridicule. Yet she was fond of her relatives, and ready to favour anyone she liked. The

Queen could scarcely bear her haughtiness, so different from the modest treatment she had received from Mlle. de la Vallière, whom she was fond of. She would say of Mme. de Montespan: "That harlot will be the death of me." I have already written of the retreat and instructive end of Mme. de Montespan.

She had some grounds for jealousy even at the height of her power. Mlle. de Fontange attracted the King's notice and became his "official" mistress; but she never shone as brilliantly as Mme. de Montespan, nor was she as fortunate in her repentance. She was popular for a while because of her beauty, but her intelligence was not great: to remain in the King's good graces, it was necessary to amuse him. He had no chance to tire of her, for her early death under rather suspicious circumstances put an end to this affair.

His other affairs were mostly temporary. One only was of any duration, that with Mme. de Soubise; this gradually changed into a friendship, lasting until her death. She was able to extract great advantages, and her sons have made the most of the shameful inheritance which she left them. Her husband was most complacent, hardly ever going to Court, and remaining quietly in Paris or with the army, meantime piling up wealth and enjoying the advantages his beautiful wife secured for him. The Maréchale de Rochefort acted as go-between. It was in her home that Mme. de Soubise would wait for the King. The Maréchale has often told me of the various little incidents that occasionally prevented a meeting. These were never the husband's fault; he made it his business to know nothing of what was happening. His conduct was rewarded by the rapid acquisition of a large fortune. His modest house in the Place Royale was exchanged for the Palace of the Guises, who would not be able to recognise it if they saw it with the splendid additions he made to it. The children of this red-haired beauty were enabled to enrich themselves still more. The third generation is today enjoying the benefits of Madame's beauty and the infamous complacency of her husband.

Mme. de Roquelaure and her snub-nosed fool of a husband followed the same line of conduct, and she reaped considerable profit by it to the end of her days; but she was not comparable to Mme. de Soubise in beauty or wit, and could not hold her position as well. To the very last Mme. de Soubise had only to ask for anything and she got it. Though the affair with the King had long ago ended, and their relationship was altogether proper, the whole Court realised her power, and she was treated with great deference. Letters from her were taken straight to the King, and his answers, always prompt, reached her unknown to anyone. She rarely had occasion to speak with him; but if she wished to, she was at once allowed into his presence. Their interviews always occurred in public in his private room, then, as now, the Council-Room. They sat side by side at the end of the chamber, but both doors were left open, which was

not usual, and the courtiers in the next room could see in. To the end of her days it was evident from the King's behaviour that she was not indifferent to him. Every three years she used to visit Marly; but nowhere did the King ever pay her marked attention in public, because of an agreement she had made with Mme. de Maintenon, who promised to help her up whenever she needed anything. She died some years before the King, and remained beautiful to the last.

I must mention the lovely Mlle. de Ludres, a young lady of Lorraine, Madame's Maid of Honour, whom the King openly courted for a brief period. This affair lasted only a short while, and Mme. de Montespan again triumphed without a rival.

I now come to a different sort of love-affair, which astonished Europe as much as the others had shocked it. I refer to the King's union with the celebrated Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon, whose reign lasted thirty-two years. Born in the West Indies, whither her father (perhaps a gentleman by birth) had gone to make a living, she came to France alone, and was charitably received by Mme. de Neullant, mother of the Maréchale de Navailles, a miserly old lady, who made her keep the keys and see that oats were measured out daily for the horses. She later accompanied Mme. de Neullant to Paris, where by good luck she was introduced to the famous Scarron. She was young, beautiful, clever, and brilliant; Scarron took a liking for her, and his friends, who admired her still more, induced him to end her misfortunes by marrying her.

A marriage with this joyous and learned cripple seemed to a woman in her poor circumstances an unhopèd-for piece of good fortune, and she consented to the union. Scarron was a great deal in good company; it was the fashion to go to his house, since he was unable to leave it. The cleverest and most famous men of the day went there, attracted by his witty conversation and the marvellous cheerfulness with which he bore his illness. Everyone was charmed by his bride, who made there many useful acquaintances. Yet when her husband died she was forced to accept charity from her parish of St. Eustache. She rented a room in an attic, and lived there some time with her servant in great poverty.

Gradually her charms enabled her to live somewhat more comfortably. She was supported by Villars, the Marshal's father; by Beuvron, the three Villarceaux, and several others. Eventually she found herself in easy circumstances. She obtained admittance to the Hôtel d'Albret, and then to the Hôtel de Richelieu, and then to one great house after another. But it must not be thought that Mme. Scarron was received there as an equal; she ran errands, ordered the servants to bring firewood, to ask whether dinner would soon be served or whether milord's carriage had returned, and similar services which have since then been rendered unnecessary by the use of bells.

Mme. Scarron became acquainted with a great many people at the

Hôtel d'Albret, several of whom were useful to her; to others she was later able to render great favours. She made the acquaintance of M. and Mme. de Montespan, who were close relatives of the Marshal d'Albret, and frequent guests at his house. Her cleverness and manner won Mme. de Montespan's confidence, and she proposed Mme. Scarron as a suitable person to take charge of the two children she had borne the King. The existence of these children was at first kept secret, and Mme. Scarron was given a house in the Marais, where she lived with them in retirement. Later the children were acknowledged by the King and their governess then went to live with them at Court.

Mme. de Montespan's affection for her increased and more than once she secured money for her from the King, who could not abide her. He did not conceal the fact that what he gave her was given unwillingly and only to please Mme. de Montespan. The estate of Maintenon was offered for sale at about this time, and Mme. de Montespan thought that it would suit Mme. Scarron because it was near Versailles. She gave the King no peace until he enabled her to purchase it. So Mme. Scarron soon after took the name of Mme. de Maintenon. The house and gardens were run down, and Mme. de Montespan again appealed to the King for money to repair them. She did this while dressing, and when the King visited her he was accompanied only by the Captain of the Guard, who happened to be the Marshal de Lorge. He has often described the scene to me. At first the King turned a deaf ear, and then absolutely refused Mme. de Montespan's request. He grew angry at her pertinacity, saying he could not understand her fondness for the creature, or how she could persist in keeping her when he had often asked her to send her away. He said he could not bear Mme. Scarron, and if anyone would guarantee he would never hear of her again, he would gladly give her more money, although he had already done too much. Mme. de Montespan said no more and was rather sorry she had pressed the matter. The Marshal de Lorge, a truthful man, never forgot what he had heard; he has often repeated it to me and to others in exactly the same way. The words surprised him at the time, but much more so when he contrasted them with the astonishing state of things that afterwards developed.

M. du Maine was very lame because, it was said, he had, as a child, fallen from his nurse's arms. The treatment prescribed by the Paris physicians did no good, and it was decided to put him under a specialist in Flanders, and later to have him take the waters at Barèges. The letters sent by the governess to Mme. de Montespan during these trips were shown to the King, who thought them well-written, so that his aversion for Mme. de Maintenon began to diminish. Mme. de Montespan's surly temper did the rest. She could never control it, and vented it on the King more readily than on anyone else. He was in love with her, but was much displeased by her moods. Mme. de Maintenon used to reproach Mme. de

Montespan for her behaviour, and her efforts in this direction were reported to the King, partly by Mme. de Montespan, who did so in order to help Mme. de Maintenon. He began to speak more familiarly with Mme. de Maintenon and after a while to tell her his troubles and explain what he wanted her to say to Mme. de Montespan.

The wily governess made the most of these opportunities, and gradually took the place of Mme. de Montespan, who realised too late that she could not dispense with her. Mme. de Maintenon then began to complain to the King of what she had suffered from a mistress who cared so little for himself. They sympathised with each other until at length Mme. de Maintenon had entirely usurped Mme. de Montespan's place in the King's affections. She knew the art of keeping it. Luck (I do not like to say Providence in this connection), which was preparing for this proudest of Kings the worst humiliation possible, commanded that his affection for the woman should increase, especially through Mme. de Montespan's jealousy and furious temper. This is charmingly described in guarded phrases in Mme. de Sévigné's letters to Mme. de Grignan; for Mme. de Maintenon had seen a good deal of Mme. de Sévigné, and her friends Mme. de Coulanges and Mme. de la Fayette. These ladies soon perceived her growing influence. Mme. de Sévigné hints at the favour of Mme. de Soubise.

The same chance so ordered matters that the Queen should live long enough for the King's love for Mme. de Maintenon to reach its height, though not long enough for it to subside. The worst thing that befell the King was the loss of his wife when this new attachment had taken the place of his old one for Mme. de Montespan, whose temper had now become unbearable. She was enraged to think that the rival who had supplanted her and who was years older than herself and not so fair, owed everything to her own goodness of heart; and especially so when she remembered how she had refused to dismiss her at the King's own request. She was chagrined to realise that when he visited her now it was really to see her protégée, nay, her servant; that he was put out when she was not there; and when he left her it was often to go to a private interview with Mme. de Maintenon. At this precise moment the King was at last released.

The first days of his widowhood were passed with Monsieur at St. Cloud, and afterwards at Fontainebleau, where he spent the entire autumn. His absence from Mme. de Maintenon served to kindle his passion. Just after his return (so it is said, for I must distinguish between what is positive and what is not), he spoke more freely to her. She put her power to a supreme test, and on religious grounds refused to give in to him. She even preached to him, and made him fear hell; speaking now of her love and again of her conscience, she played her cards so well that she attained her end, though posterity will hardly credit it. One thing is certain:

shortly after the King returned from Fontainebleau, the winter after the Queen's death, his wedding with Mme. de Maintenon was celebrated at midnight by Père de la Chaise, with Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, and Louvois, as witnesses. The only other person present was Montchevreuil, who used to lend his house every summer to his cousin Villarceaux, that he might keep the new Queen there, as he had in Paris. Villarceaux was ashamed to live thus in his own house in his wife's presence, out of consideration for her patient goodness. He therefore used to borrow his cousin's house, and paid all expenses while he was there.

The novelty of marriage, which usually diminishes the wife's influence, especially in marriages like this, served only to consolidate that of Mme. de Maintenon. This was soon proved publicly by the fact that apartments opposite the King's on the same floor at Versailles were given over to her. From that time forward the King invariably spent several hours with her every day he was at Versailles, and wherever the Court happened to be her rooms were near, if possible on the same floor. Her power was soon firmly rooted; ministers, generals, the King's nearest kin, folk of all classes, became her subjects. Her word was law, her approval was always required; she was consulted about everything: appointments, favours, punishments, church affairs — all was submitted to her. Like an all-powerful spirit, she ruled King and State continuously, unopposed, without an indication of any diminution of her influence. This lasted for more than thirty years. Such was the extraordinary woman on whom the eyes of Europe were fixed. I must now attempt to describe her.

She was a remarkably able woman, whose natural ability had been developed by a knowledge of the world acquired in the best society, where she was at first admitted as though on probation, but later welcomed for her own sake. Her experience had taught her how to flatter, to exercise her manners, and be anxious to please. Her manners greatly helped her; they were indescribably graceful and easy, though with a sort of reserve and deference that had become second nature to her in her former condition. Her conversation was flowing and pleasant. She spoke well, even with a kind of eloquence. Being three or four years older than the King, she had appeared in society at a time when the art of conversation and gallantry was at its height; and traces of it were perceptible in her. The period was noted too for a certain preciousness of manner, which she had learned, and this had become more noticeable after she began to take on airs of importance, and more so after she began to make a show of her religious propensities.

Piety became her main characteristic toward the end; it seemed necessary to maintain her in the position which she had won chiefly by its means; it was especially necessary to enable her to rule, for that was the end to which she sacrificed everything. Such things are not easy to reconcile with truth and honesty, and it must not be imagined that she

had more than an outward show of those attributes. Yet she was not naturally hypocritical; the necessities of her situation had forced her to be insincere at first, and this had since become a habit. Her natural fickleness made her seem more insincere than she actually was. She was never constant, except when it became quite necessary: her natural inclination was to change friends as she changed pastimes, except with a few friends of her early days (I have mentioned these elsewhere) and one or two whose help she required. She had no chance to vary her amusements after she became Queen. Her variable character affected serious affairs on frequent occasions in a most unfortunate way. She quickly took a liking for someone, and as quickly dropped him, and went to the opposite extreme, often without any reason. The humiliation she had so long suffered had narrowed her intelligence and embittered her heart. Her ideas and policies were so petty that they were considered scarcely worthy even of the widow Scarron: one would have thought she was still Mme. Scarron.

This meanness of mind in a person of such high position was a very unpleasant defect, and it greatly undermined her power for doing good. The way she would be attracted to people and drop them again was most dangerous. If there was anything she liked about a person admitted to a hearing, she would be the soul of frankness and cordiality, inspiring the highest hopes; but on the occasion of a second interview, he would probably disgust her, and she became bored and laconic. It was a waste of time to try to find out the reason for this sudden change; there was no cause except her fickleness, which was an incredible thing. The few persons to whom she was constant were victims on occasion of her variable temper, and after her second marriage no one approached her without apprehension. Everything about her was beset with difficulty; it was hard to obtain admission to her private court; partly because such was the King's wish and her own, partly because of the way her time was arranged. Her influence was felt universally.

She was easily deceived by anyone who confided in her, especially if the confidence were an actual confession. Another weakness was her passion for managing everything; this deprived her of the little freedom she might otherwise have had. The time she wasted at St. Cyr is incredible; numberless other convents also occupied her attention; she believed she was destined to be a sort of universal abbess, especially in spiritual affairs. She fancied herself a Mother of the Church, and liked to interfere with the details of certain dioceses. Bishops, heads of seminaries and brotherhoods, abbesses in charge of convents, all these were her concern. Her time was occupied by a vast amount of business, troublesome and usually useless. She read and wrote numberless letters, and gave spiritual advice; she mixed in every manner of childishness, which usually ended in nothing. Occasionally, however, she made wrong decisions in matters of importance, and made deplorably bad appointments.

The King believed himself to be a sort of Apostle because he had always fought Jansenism, or what he believed to be such; and Mme. de Maintenon made use of his zeal to insinuate herself into everything. His ignorance had led him into the evil habit of believing what his spiritual directors told him about theological matters, and the differences among the various opinions in Church matters. As ignorant as a child in these things, he allowed himself to be persuaded by the Jesuits that every school except their own was permeated by a spirit of republican independence and sought to destroy his power, whereas the very opposite is the truth. They made him believe that those who did not agree with their own doctrines were Jansenists, and that Jansenists were, as a matter of fact, opposed to his royal self. This was a point on which the King was unbelievably sensitive. It was for this reason that the saintly hermits of Port-Royal, to whom the Christians owe lasting gratitude for their enlightening works on religion, were at last dispersed. The persecution of these people on all possible occasions gave the King a chance to show his religious zeal, and Mme. de Maintenon spurred him on. After a time the Jesuits offered him another field for his endeavours.

Jansenism was at last no longer much feared, and the Jesuits thought it best to let the Jansenists be for a time, waiting until they could revive the subject under some new pretext. The King had begun to imagine that people's consciences were under his authority, and it was not difficult to stimulate his hatred against a form of religion condemned by the Church, which had, as a matter of fact, condemned itself by suppressing articles of faith held by the Church from ancient days. The Jesuits worked upon his religious zeal and desire for absolute power. They painted the Huguenots in the darkest colours; he was told that they formed a state within the state; that they had brought this about by armed resistance to his predecessors; and finally that he had promised to protect them by means of a humiliating agreement.

He was told nothing of the real history of the Huguenots; of the conspiracies of the League against his grandfather and all that part of the royal family; and nothing of the teachings of the Gospel, the Apostles, and the Fathers about the proper way of preaching Jesus Christ, and converting heretics. It was easy, at the expense of others, to perform a glorious action which, he was assured, would win him salvation in the next world. It appealed to the fervour of this religious neophyte, while his pride was flattered by the notion of doing a thing that none of his predecessors had been able to do. He was led to believe that it would be a sacred work, as well as a masterpiece of policy, to break his promise to the Huguenots and put an end to that faction forever.

The days of our great ministers had passed; Le Tellier was on the point of death, and his son was the only minister left, since Seignelay had hardly begun to rise. Louvois, who was always anxious for war, discouraged by

the recent signing of a twenty years' peace, thought that a blow struck at the Huguenots would crush the Protestant cause in Europe. He believed, too, that it would increase his own power, for the King must needs use troops against the Huguenots and be forced to depend upon him to carry out his plans. Mme. de Maintenon saw in all this more than the Jesuits explained to her, and she was not likely to let pass an opportunity of flattering the King; she would use his religious zeal in order to make her own position more secure. The matter was therefore settled between the King, his confessor, his minister, and his newly-married wife. No one else was, or could be, in the secret. Even if it had been otherwise, who would have dared to say a word in criticism?

The first result of this nefarious plot was the arbitrary Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, without any sort of pretext. Then followed the proscriptions. Ultimately a fourth part of the kingdom was depopulated, and our commerce ruined. For a long period the country suffered the ravages of the *dragonnade*, which caused the death of thousands of innocent people of all ages, both men and women. Families were separated; men of all ranks, often old and infirm, respected for their piety and learning, were sent to the galleys, to be whipped like slaves; many were driven from their homes and left destitute, to seek a refuge in foreign lands, whither they took our arts and crafts, enriching other countries and causing their cities to flourish at the expense of France.

Yet the worse consequence of this persecution was the hypocrisy and perjury it occasioned. Among these victims of their own errors some were found ready to sacrifice their consciences in order to save their property. These converts were dragged to church and forced to receive the Body of the Holy One, though they really believed that what they ate was only bread, which they ought to detest. Often not a day elapsed between the first torture and the ceremony of Communion. The torturers themselves led the converts to it and swore to their conversion. The bishops for the most part lent their authority to these sacrilegious proceedings; and sent in lists of converts to Court in order to make themselves more important and eligible for promotion. The bishops and dragoons were supported by the Intendants, who likewise sent in lists of converts.

Those who abjured Protestantism were reckoned by thousands; two thousand here, six thousand there, and so on — all instantaneous conversions. The King was pleased to see his zeal so fruitful in results, and fancied that the days of the Apostles' preaching had returned. He took all the credit to himself. The bishops flattered him; the Jesuits proclaimed his praises; though France was filled with horror and confusion, never were such triumphs proclaimed in his honour. He doubted not that all these conversions were genuine. He thought he appeared great in the eyes of men, and had done much for God as reparation for the sins and scandals of his own past.

But there were several good Catholics, and some holy bishops, who bitterly regretted that an orthodox king should have recourse to the same methods against error which pagan tyrants had formerly used against the truth, the confessors, and the church martyrs. But the King had an ear only for praise of himself. The perjury caused by the forced conversions deeply grieved the clergy; they bewailed the irreparable harm done to the cause of real religion. Meantime our enemies were exulting over our madness and turning it to their own uses, while they fostered vast designs based on the hatred we had caused in the Protestant countries.

But such considerations had no effect on the King. Not even the Pope's disapproval could make him see clearly. In earlier days Rome had not been ashamed to praise the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and had even sanctioned public celebrations for it, and ordered the greatest masters to adorn the Vatican with pictures of the awful event! Odescalchi was then Pope, under the name of Innocent XI. He never expressed any approval of this slaughter of the Huguenots, since he regarded it merely as a political effort to destroy a party that had often proved troublesome.

Shortly after the Revocation of the Edict, Mme. de Maintenon founded the splendid institution of St. Cyr, for the education of the daughters of poor nobles. She obtained the rich revenues of St. Denis, which apparently diminished her expenses. So worthy was its aim that its establishment was most welcome. She needed something to occupy her time, in which the King would be interested, in order that it might be a subject of conversation with him. She also hoped, in making herself protectress of the poor nobles, to gain the sympathies of all the nobility, and perhaps prepare for the recognition of her marriage. She had not given up hope of this, even though she was prevented by Louvois, and when he died she began laying her plans anew.

I have told how when the Queen's apartments, closed since the death of the Bavarian Dauphine, were reopened, it was rumoured that the announcement of the marriage was probable. Now, the rumour was well-founded: the marriage would have been declared if the King had not thought it well to ask the advice of the famous Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, and Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai, both of whom argued against it. This settled the question once for all. Though the Archbishop was already on bad terms with Mme. de Maintenon over Mme. Guyon's affair, he had not yet lost the King's favour, as he did shortly after. Bossuet in no way suffered for giving his advice; and as a matter of fact, for several reasons Mme. de Maintenon made no effort to make him feel her displeasure. She was, as we have seen, guided by Godet, Bishop of Chartres, who made use of Bossuet's name and literary ability to complete the ruin of Fénelon. Besides, Bossuet unintentionally rendered Mme. de Maintenon a great service.

He was a man whose learning was equalled only by his unimpeachable

character and honour. The King, who had known him well when he was Monseigneur's tutor, had great confidence in him and often sought advice from him when troubled by scruples of conscience. Bossuet spoke to him freely, like a bishop of the early Church, and more than once persuaded him to reform his habits and, when the King relapsed, boldly blamed him. Finally, he induced the King to break off all his love-affairs, and ultimately got Mme. de Montespan dismissed from Court. This was a decided relief to Mme. de Maintenon, who never felt quite easy so long as her former mistress saw the King daily, even though the visits were short. It was necessary to show her polite attentions, and this reminded her of the humble situation she had formerly occupied. Mme. de Montespan took good care to remind her of this. She therefore owed much to the Bishop of Meaux.

It was at this time that the intimacy between M. du Maine and Mme. de Maintenon began, which prepared the way for the remarkable honours he afterwards attained, and, if his former governess had had her own way, would have put him on the throne. He quickly perceived the difficulties of the situation, and saw that his mother would be rather a hindrance to his advancement than otherwise; but he had everything to expect from Mme. de Maintenon. He did not hesitate in choosing between them. He helped the Bishop of Meaux persuade his mother to leave Court, and even offered to carry the King's order to her. In a word, he did all he could to induce her to go away. Mme. de Montespan was deeply offended by his conduct, and never forgave him. But this gave him small trouble: he had the favourite on his side and counted on her great affection to do everything in her power for him as long as she lived.

Her position became more important than ever after Mme. de Montespan left. Since she had failed twice to obtain the acknowledgement of her marriage, she knew she must not refer to the subject again; she had the self-control to conceal her disappointment. The King was pleased by this, and redoubled his affection and confidence. If she had attained her object, she would perhaps have failed under the burden of public attention, whereas the secret of her position, transparent though it was, strengthened her actual power.

Mme. de Maintenon never [formally] received visitors and hardly ever went to see anyone. She visited the English Queen and was visited by her. Sometimes she went to see Mme. de Montchevreuil, her closest friend, and occasionally her niece, Mme. de Caylus. Perhaps once every two years she called on the Duchesse du Lude and two or three other ladies of high rank. Such visits were always regarded as noticeable. Her old friend, Mme. d'Heudicourt, came to her apartments almost as often as she liked; likewise Mme. de Montchevreuil and later the Marshal de Villeroi. Harcourt was allowed occasionally. These were all.

She never visited any of the royal Princesses, not even Madame, nor

did they go to her except for a special audience; this was always a matter for comment. If she wished to speak with any of the King's daughters, which was seldom except when she had to scold, she summoned them. They came trembling to her room, and left it weeping. Her doors were always open to M. du Maine; and after the marriage of the Duc de Noailles with her niece he saw her whenever he liked, but his parents were admitted only occasionally, and as a favour. This was particularly true of his mother, because the King and Mme. de Maintenon disliked and rather feared her. Mme. de Maintenon's brother was an embarrassment to her so long as she lived: he used to go to her at all hours and talk in the maddest way; often he would storm angrily at her. He had no influence with her. His wife never appeared at Court nor in society. Mme. de Maintenon pitied her and treated her kindly and sometimes dined with her, but would not have her at Versailles more than once or twice a year, and then only for a single night.

It was as hard to have an audience with her as it was with the King. She usually held her audiences at St. Cyr. Whoever wanted to speak to her at Versailles must see her as she left her rooms or returned. There were sometimes poor people who tried to see her, as well as persons of rank; and whoever succeeded was fortunate, though it was only a moment. Among those who spoke to her in this way were the Marshals de Villeroy, Harcourt, and Tessé, and later on, Vaudemont. If she was on her way to her rooms, they never went beyond the antechamber, where she closed the interview and left them. I myself never spoke to her except once, and of that I have already written. A very few ladies used to go to her apartments when the King was not present, and very rarely some of them dined with her.

She was in the habit of rising early, and as soon as she was dressed she usually went to St. Cyr between seven and eight. When she was old and feeble she used to go to bed on her arrival there, to rest a little before beginning her interviews and correspondence about the affairs of the convents and general Church matters. She had a house at Fontainebleau, which she used for the same purposes as St. Cyr; and at Marly a similar place, a small room with a window opening into the chapel. No one was ever admitted there except the Duchess of Burgundy. When the Court was at Fontainebleau the King went to her every morning after Mass, when there was no Council meeting, spending about an hour and a half alone with her, until dinner, except when he went stag-hunting and had to dine early. At Trianon and Marly these visits did not last so long, because the King liked to walk in his gardens.

They met again in the evening, but seldom alone, because the ministers in turn brought business to transact with the King. If none came, as often happened on Fridays, there were ladies there with whom the King played cards; or else there was music. The King and Mme. de Maintenon

would sit by the fireplace with tables in front of them; before the King's table were two stools, on one of which the minister sat and on the other was his bag full of papers. At nine o'clock two maid-servants came and undressed Mme. de Maintenon. Then her *maitre-d'hôtel* brought in supper (soup and some light dish); after she had eaten it her maids put her to bed. This took place before the King and the minister, who proceeded with their work, speaking as before. She was in bed by ten o'clock; the King then disappeared for a few minutes into the next room, returned to say good-night to her, and had his own supper.

Mme. de Maintenon was treated like a queen in private and in public; she was even allowed to sit on the Queen's chair in the King's presence, and that of Monseigneur, of Monsieur, and of the English Court; but in private she claimed only what was due to her position, and always kept modestly in the background. I have often seen her give place to a titled lady, even to ladies of no title but of high quality. She would never listen to their remonstrances and would refuse to take precedence over a Duchess, though with other ladies she gave in, but with polite reluctance. She was in such things civil and friendly; yet she was very dignified and had a powerful effect upon others. She always dressed richly yet simply, in a manner suited to an older woman. When one caught a glimpse of her after she had ceased to appear publicly, all one saw was a headdress and a black scarf.

Mme. de Maintenon could by no means maintain her influence without trouble; as a matter of fact, her reign was a series of masterly strokes of management, by which the King was deceived from first to last. When he was working with his minister she sat there, reading or sewing, and listening to what was said, though she seldom put in a word. Occasionally the King would ask her advice, which she gave guardedly and with seeming reluctance, rarely stating any decided desire for one course or the other, seldom indeed when it was a matter of choosing between two persons. She always acted with the minister; when it was a matter of granting a favour or making an appointment, she settled the matter with him beforehand, and he dared not oppose her choice in private or fail to support it afterward.

When the preliminary agreement was made the minister gave the King the names of those eligible for appointment, and the King would perhaps pause when he read the name already decided upon by Mme. de Maintenon. Then the minister hinted that there was no need to read further. But if the King seemed to wish to stop elsewhere, the minister mentioned other names, offering him several choices. Then if the King asked his opinion he would, after referring to the qualifications of many, show some desire for the man he actually wanted. The King nearly always hesitated, and at last asked Mme. de Maintenon what she thought. She would then smile modestly, pretending that such matters did not concern her. She

would then say something about some other person on the list, but at last mention the one whom the minister seemed to wish for.

She thus managed to make at least three-fourths of the appointments under discussion between the King and the minister. It sometimes happened that she had no preference, in which case the minister would unassisted deceive the King in the same manner. It seemed Mme. de Maintenon did not care to interfere in matters of policy, but when she did, she made the same arrangement with the minister and used the same deceptive means. In this way the clever woman had her own way in almost everything. Yet there were occasions when matters did not turn out just as she might have wished. It was necessary for her to have ministers she could trust, and this was one reason why they had such great power to procure advantages for their families: Mme. de Maintenon allowed them to do as they liked in these matters in order to bind them to her service. She was always prepared to speak in their behalf if they desired any special favour, to sympathise with their labours, and praise their industry and fidelity, thus establishing a reciprocal system of favours. She could do scarcely anything without their help, and they could not keep their positions without her co-operation and certainly not unless she wished it. When she realised that some minister was no longer in accord with her, she plotted his ruin and seldom failed to bring it about, although sometimes, as in Chamillart's case, a long time was required and no little intriguing. Pontchartrain just escaped her, by his readiness of wit, (which amused the King) and by the cleverness and sense of his wife, who was on good terms with Mme. de Maintenon after he had lost her favour; but principally because the Chancellorship, which happened to be vacant at a lucky moment for him, gave him a means of escape. The Duc de Beauvilliers was twice saved by a miracle, as I have elsewhere related.

If ministers were thus influenced by her, it is not hard to imagine what she could do to injure private persons, who were unable to defend themselves and were perhaps not even aware that any defence was necessary. Many a person, learning to his surprise that he had suffered disgrace, tried in vain to discover the reason. The documents brought by the younger Pontchartrain to the King in the evening, with reports of spies and tales about Paris and the Court, gave Mme. de Maintenon many opportunities for doing favours or ill turns.

Torcy never brought any business affairs to the King on these occasions, and so hardly ever saw Mme. de Maintenon. She disliked him, and his wife even more. She was an Arnaud, and that name alone counterbalanced any virtues she might have had. The post-office was Torcy's province, and all its secrets were discussed between him and the King in private. The King often carried parts copied out of letters to Mme. de Maintenon, though this was not a regular thing: it was only when it occurred to the King to tell her, that she learned anything in this fashion. Torcy was

Minister of Foreign Affairs, and all such matters were discussed in Council. If anything unusual occurred, Torcy went to the King at once. Mme. de Maintenon wished to have such things discussed before her that she might make her influence felt in foreign affairs, but Torcy was wise enough not to fall into a trap of this kind, and explained that such business did not require discussion at regular council meetings. Yet the King told Mme. de Maintenon all about the foreign policy, though that was not like being present at stated times when she knew what was going to be discussed and could make plans beforehand. Talking over with the King such facts as he chose to relate was not so satisfactory, if she wanted to follow a particular line of policy in helping or harming some particular person. It was inconvenient to have to say straight out what she wished.

The King was invariably on his guard against direct attacks of this sort. When some minister or general tried to secure a favour for a relative or friend of Mme. de Maintenon's and did so without tact, he often refused, saying afterwards, half in anger, "So-and-so is a good courtier; he has tried to help a friend of Mme. de Maintenon." This made her very careful in letting the King know her wishes. If someone asked her to use her influence, even in a small matter, she always replied that she never interfered and sometimes, if it concerned a minister she could trust, she would refer the person to him, promising to mention the matter; but she seldom went so far as that. Yet people would ask for her help in the hope that by this act of respect they might prevent her opposing them; also hoping that she might do something, which happened occasionally.

Long before he became Chancellor, Le Tellier had learned to know the King's character thoroughly. A good friend of his once asked him to procure a favour for him, relating to some affair the minister was to discuss with the King. Le Tellier said he would do what he could. This did not satisfy the friend, who told him that with his influence he might promise more. "You do not understand the situation," said Le Tellier. "We are sure that out of twenty matters brought to the King, he will decide nineteen as we wish; but we are also sure that he will be against us on the twentieth. The point is that we never know which he will decide against us; often it is the one we especially wish him to agree to. He keeps these little set-backs in store for us to show that he is master. If we wrangle with him and let him see that we insist on having our way, which we seldom do, he is sure to decide against us. But after giving us this lesson, he is sorry to have disappointed us, and becomes more tractable. It is at such times that we can do anything with him that we like."

This was the King's way of treating his ministers: he mistakenly thought that thus he prevented their influencing him. He used the same process with Mme. de Maintenon. Occasionally he would lose his temper and speak roughly to her, and was quite pleased with himself for doing so. She would burst into tears; and sometimes, after a scene, she pretended to be ill. That was generally the best way of getting round the King.

The King was never to be influenced into changing his habits by the illness, actual or pretended, of anyone. He was so self-centred that he never gave a thought to the sufferings of other people except as they interfered with his own comfort. His selfishness was extraordinary. When his passion for his mistresses was greatest they were forced to go with him on his journeys, no matter how they felt. Ill or well, before or after their confinements, they had to travel, laced tight in their court dresses; and until this etiquette was relaxed a little at Marly no lady, whoever she was, dared to appear at Court or in the King's carriage except in full dress. They were forced to accompany him thus to Flanders, or even farther away, to dance late at night, and attend dinners and entertainments. And they had invariably to appear cheerful and sprightly, despite heat or cold, wind or dirt; and they were expected to be on time on all occasions. His daughters were treated in the same way. In spite of what Fagon [the King's physician] or Mme. de Maintenon said, he showed no more consideration for the Duchesse de Berry, or even for the Duchess of Burgundy, though he loved her as deeply as he could love anyone. Both suffered miscarriages because of this treatment, and from what he said when he heard the news, he seemed rather relieved than otherwise. Yet neither of them had a living child at the time.

When he travelled his carriage was always filled with ladies—his mistresses, and later his illegitimate daughters. Sometimes Madame came, and other ladies when there was room. But this was only when he went to Fontainebleau, Chantilly, Compiègne, or on a longer journey: when he went out hunting, or to Marly or Meudon, he travelled alone in a light coach. His large coach, when he went on a long journey, was well stocked with food: cold meat, pastry, and fruit. Before they had gone a mile the King would offer the ladies something to eat. He himself never ate between meals, not even fruit: but he took pleasure in seeing other people eat, nay, even overeat. He demanded that the ladies be hungry and cheerful and eat with a good appetite; if they did not, he was displeased, and rather spitefully charged them with affectation. The same ladies, at supper with him in the evening, were expected to eat with as hearty an appetite as though they had had nothing during the day.

Nothing was to be said about the other natural functions. This would have been embarrassing for ladies, with an escort of horse-guards preceding and following the coach, and an officer at each side. They raised clouds of dust that covered everything in the coach; but the King, who liked fresh air, insisted on having the windows down, and would have been very much put out if any lady had dared pull a curtain to ward off sun or wind. He always travelled at high speed, usually with many changes of horses.

The Duchesse de Chevreuse, whom the King always took in his coach so long as she was able to travel, told me a story about one of these

journeys from Versailles to Fontainebleau. They had gone no more than five or six miles when she was seized with one of those natural wants which it seems out of the question to postpone. The King was anxious to travel straight through, stopping only to dine in the coach, without getting down. Unfortunately, her necessity did not accommodate itself to the situation. During the stop for dinner, when she might have got out, she felt better; but just after they started again she suffered worse than before. More than once she was almost forced to request the King to stop and let her out. But her courage helped, and she resisted, almost fainting, until they reached Fontainebleau. There she saw the Duc de Beauvilliers, whom she seized by the arm and told that she should die if she had not an opportunity for immediate relief. They crossed the court and went into the chapel, which was luckily open, since Mass was celebrated in it every morning. Necessity knows no law, and then and there Mme. de Chevreuse found relief, while the Duke kept watch at the door.

This trifling anecdote is told to illustrate the constraint which people suffered under who were in daily contact with the King, even those highest in favour, as the Duchesse de Chevreuse was at that time. This may seem trivial; it is, but it is too characteristic to be omitted. The King himself indeed sometimes had natural wants; in which event he would unceremoniously get out of his coach. The ladies would remain in the carriage.

Mme. de Maintenon did not like the open air, and suffered from certain infirmities; but the only privilege permitted her was travelling in a private carriage. No matter what the state of her health might be, she had to make the journey and arrive on time, that the King might find her settled in her rooms when he came. She often went to Marly so sick that one would not have compelled a maid-servant to go out had she been as ill. Once on a journey to Fontainebleau it was a question whether she would survive until she arrived. Ill or well, the King invariably went to her room at the designated hour and transacted the business agreed on, and the utmost she would dare to do was to go to bed, and lie in a fever.

As I have already said, the King liked fresh air and disliked hot rooms. He disliked finding everything shut up when Mme. de Maintenon was in this condition; so he at once had all the windows thrown open, and kept them so until he took supper at ten, oblivious of the effect of the air upon her. The fact that she had a headache was no reason why the musicians should be stopped when music had been planned or why there should not be a hundred candles blinding her eyes under these circumstances; the King pursued his routine, without thinking of asking if it annoyed her.

Her servants (nothing is without interest that concerns her) were few, modest, respectful, and quiet. This was what was required. They would not have kept their places if they had not fallen in with her wishes. Her

maids spent all their time in her rooms, for she not only disliked their leaving, but would not allow them to have visitors. The King knew all her servants, both men and women, and treated them familiarly, speaking to them when he happened to come to her rooms before she had arrived. The only remarkable one was the aged servant who had been with her when she lived in an attic after Scarron's death. Nanon, as she was called then and as Mme. de Maintenon still called her, became Mlle. Balbien. She was as old and pious as her mistress, whom she copied in her dress and in all other respects. She was an important person in a way, knowing as she did all Mme. de Maintenon's personal secrets, and keeping watch over the young ladies at St. Cyr, who came to live with her from time to time; over her nieces, and even the Duchess of Burgundy. She even managed to make friends with her.

There was no one at Court, from the royal Princes and the illegitimate Princes downwards, who did not fear her and treat her politely, even respectfully. She was a rather foolish woman, with an artificial manner, but not ill-natured. If she did anyone a bad turn it was usually because of her stupidity. We have seen what she could do in the matter of the appointment of the Duchesse du Lude, only four hours after the King had spoken so urgently against it. But she did not interfere very much. People who saw her would give her money: her promise to secure permission to go to Marly brought her in a considerable income.

Mme. de Maintenon, as I say, though a queen in private, was a private individual in public, though there were certain public functions where she was treated as a queen; as at the Compiègne review, and sometimes at Marly when she would accompany the King to see some new improvement. I admit I am always undecided between the fear of repeating myself and of omitting some of those interesting details we miss in the usual kind of history or memoir. We ought to see the Princes' daily life described, and that of their mistresses and ministers: a reasonable curiosity, since such details give us a truer insight into the manners of the time and the hidden forces that were brought to bear on the government. If these matters are properly considered interesting and helpful with regard to other times, how much the more so are they in regard to the long and eventful reign of Louis XIV; especially with a person so extraordinary as Mme. de Maintenon who, after living so long in a humble position, became for over thirty years the King's mistress, wife, confidante, and powerful adviser! This thought makes me less fearful of repeating myself. I think it is better to risk telling the same anecdote twice than to omit anything likely to throw light on this interesting matter.

Mme. de Maintenon, as I said, was a queen in private. She always sat in an arm-chair, in the most comfortable part of her room, before the King, the royal family, and even the English Queen. She barely rose to greet Monseigneur or Monsieur, who seldom came to her rooms. She never

did so for anyone else, even the royal Princes and their wives. The only exceptions she made were for private persons who had an audience with her, unless she knew them well. In such cases she always behaved courteously. She scarcely ever spoke to the Duchess of Burgundy but as "darling," even when others were present; and when she referred to her or to the Duchesse de Berry, it was familiarly as "the Duchess of Burgundy," "the Duchesse de Berry," without the usual "Madame." Similarly, she spoke of the Dauphin, rarely calling him M. le Dauphin. I have told how she would send for the Princesses, legitimate and illegitimate, and scold them, and how afraid of her they were. Only the Duchess of Burgundy had won her affection by her manners and attentions. She always spoke to Mme. de Maintenon as "Aunt."

It was strange to see the King and Mme. de Maintenon on their walks in the Marly gardens, which she took to please him. He would have been infinitely more relaxed in his manner toward the Queen, and would not have treated her with anywhere near so much polite attention. Indeed, he showed her the most extreme respect, though he was surrounded by courtiers and whomever of the inhabitants of Marly chose to come. Strangely enough, he always imagined himself in private there, only because it was Marly. She rode in a sedan-chair beside his carriage, and he often went on foot by her side. He would constantly take off his hat, and lean over to speak to her, or answer her if she spoke first; she seldom did this, because he was in the habit of calling her attention to various things. Since she feared fresh air, even in the best weather, she used to open the windows an inch or two and shut them again at once. When they reached the new fountain, or some other spot, her chair was put down and the same thing went on again. Often the Dauphine would stand near one pole and join in the conversation, but the window of the chair was never opened. The King would go with Mme. de Maintenon back to the castle, take obsequious leave of her, and continue his walk. Here was a spectacle to which one never became used.

This is the sort of petty detail which is left out of most memoirs, but which is characteristic, I think, and what is needed to give a clear idea of past times.

The later years of Louis XIV's reign were overcast by failures and misfortunes. His frontiers were invaded, and his finances exhausted. The inefficiency of his ministers and generals put upon him the whole burden of government. He was cast down by the consciousness not of his own mistakes, which he never acknowledged even to himself, but of his inability to protect himself longer against the united forces of Europe. Before this threatened ruin of his kingdom had passed, he was visited by a series of domestic tragedies. His heart, so insensible before, was broken by the death of the beautiful Dauphine; the Dauphin, who had begun to take over part of his burden, followed a few days later. What was worst of all,

even the rumours as to their deaths, so carefully circulated, preyed upon his mind.

He bore his many troubles with a fortitude which few could have shown. It was then he proved himself worthy the name of Louis the Great, which had been given him so prematurely. His philosophic calm, his resolution not to give up hope, that came not from ignorance but from natural courage and genuine wisdom, aroused the admiration of all Europe and among his own subjects won back many who had been cooled by the oppressive character of his long reign. He humbled himself to God, acknowledging His justice and begging His mercy, but without minimising his kingly office in the eyes of men. It would have been well for him if while adoring God he had realised the mistakes which had caused this punishment; such mistakes, of course, as could still be rectified. But these were hidden from him, though everyone else perceived them. The only faults he recognised were those that were past all remedy, except in the form of confession, grief, and useless repentance.

He was a remarkable combination of clear vision and wilful blindness. During the last months of his life he let himself be governed by his illegitimate sons, aided and abetted by Mme. de Maintenon, so much so that he dared not refuse any measure suggested to increase their power. He salved his conscience by allowing them to see his reluctance, yet he yielded invariably by sacrificing everything to them: his closest relatives, the well-being of his only descendant, the welfare of his realm, his glory, his opinions, even his liberty. Yet he was cognisant of the injustice he was doing and of its uselessness, as may be proved by his words to the English Queen. When he gave his last testament to the officers of Parlement, he could not refrain from saying that it had been forced from him; he had been made to do this against his wish, in spite of what he believed wrong. What a strange avowal! What a contrast between his firmness of mind under the most terrible catastrophes and this weak concession to the obscure members of his family! What a wonderful illustration of the fate foretold in the Book to those who give themselves up to the love and domination of women!

The proud King was uneasy under his self-made yoke; yet the last days of his life were given over to consolidating the power of M. du Maine and making his position secure. To him was entrusted the education of the future King [Louis XV], and his underlings were chosen only because of their hostility to the Duc d'Orléans and their devotion to himself. The new King's governor was to be the Marshal de Villeroy, a person as unfit for the position as any who could be found, who, though he was to have charge of a child of five, was seventy-one years old. Saumery, one of the sub-governors, had behaved shamefully as tutor to the Duke of Burgundy; had avoided going with him on the Lille campaign, pleading ill-health, and had openly joined Vendôme's cabal. That was sufficient reason for M.

du Maine to appoint him, as a man who would do anything for money. Ruffé, the other sub-governor, falsely declared that he was of the house of Damas. He was a poor, dull-witted fellow; his property was in the Dombes district, where the favour of M. du Maine was very necessary to him. The offer pleased him, and he accepted, in spite of his claims to high birth. The other appointments were made for similar reasons. Mme. de Maintenon saw to it that Fleury was appointed, though he had lately left his diocese of Fréjus.

And yet M. du Maine felt that his position was not sufficiently secure, so he induced the King to make a codicil to his will. This was the last document he signed, the last sacrifice to his bastards. By this codicil he put his entire household, civil and military, under the direction of M. du Maine, and his subordinate the Marshal de Villeroy. Nor was this all, since the will provided for a Council of Regency, entirely composed of persons devoted to M. du Maine and hateful to the Duc d'Orléans, who would be deprived of his authority as Regent.

The last acts of the King were the last signs he gave of his foresight. Through them he left his successor and his whole realm at the mercy of the ambition of a man whose very existence he ought never to have recognised. This is an unforgettable disgrace to his memory; but such was the depth to which he had been dragged by pride and weakness, by his low-born wife, by the children of his double adultery, and by that unspeakable confessor, Père Tellier. These were the proofs of his repentance, his atonement for a life which had shocked Europe; the last act of his authority, as he was about to appear before God with the responsibility weighing upon him for a reign of fifty-six years, during which his wars and waste of all kinds had occasioned the loss of so many men's lives and so many millions of money; during which he had been an enemy of all order, had confused all classes, cast aside ancient and sacred laws, brought his kingdom to a condition of hopeless misery, indeed to the very brink of destruction, from which it was saved only by a miracle of God.

What shall we say of the calm courage he showed at the very last? It is a fact that he showed no regret in taking leave of this world, and never gave way to any sort of impatience. He made his arrangements when in complete bodily and mental health, behaving up to the very end with the gravity which had characterised every act of his life, and a natural simplicity which precluded any suspicion that he might be playing a part. During the last days, after he had laid aside all earthly matters, his mind was entirely taken up with thoughts of God and of his own unimportance; so much so that he occasionally used the expression "When I was King." Fully conscious though he was of his own sins, he felt no fear. Strangely enough, his trust in God was supreme, founded on the hope of His mercy through the blood of Jesus Christ. Who can but admire an end so dignified and so truly Christian? Yet who can think of it without terror?

Nothing could be expressed with more simplicity or humility than his last words to his family and courtiers. What he said to his confessor was deservedly recorded, though it has since been too much quoted with intent to flatter the King's memory. The Marshal de Villeroy set the example by having the words copied and hung up by the side of his bed, where he used always to have the King's portrait. It was even in his tent when he was on a campaign. He used to shed tears, in the King's presence, whenever a preacher praised the King to his face. Though he spoke of his successor about his wars and his building operations, the King said nothing about his luxury and wastefulness; nor did he refer to his love-affairs, which precipitated so many evils. Yet some allusion to them would have been more to the point than any other. But how could he refer to such a thing in the presence of his illegitimate sons, particularly when the last act of his life had been to put the final touch to their disgraceful ambitions? Except for this omission, his behaviour up to then had been worthy of great admiration, showing a spirit both Christian and royal.

What should be said of the last words to his nephew to whom, after signing the codicil and receiving the last Sacraments, he gave a positive assurance to that there was nothing in his will to displease him? Yet it had been made deliberately, twice, in the will as well as in the codicil, expressly to dishonour him and deprive him of every sort of authority. He used flattering words, recommended to him his successor, whom he had taken from his care, and his realm, which he told him he was to govern; yet he had deprived him of all power over it. Was this dishonesty the final jest of a dying man? It is hard to answer the question. It would be charitable to believe that he was in earnest. He had never believed in the power of the will that had been extorted from him and had little doubt, maybe he even hoped, that this unjust and shocking document, which might easily sow dissension in his kingdom and his own family, would be treated as was the wise and just will of his father. He had more than once said that none of his testamentary provisions would have any binding power when he was gone, and it may be that when he spoke to the Duc d'Orléans, an hour after signing the codicil, he really believed this and that he regarded him as the future head of the Government. This is a natural assumption.

There was something remarkable about the complete tranquillity of mind enjoyed by the King in his last moments. He died of mortification; and the physicians declare that this disease calms all mental worries as it numbs the sense of bodily pain. But there were some, among them those admitted to the room, who accounted for this peace of mind far differently. The Jesuits have a number of lay-brothers in their Society, men of all conditions, even some married men. There is no doubt that Desnoyers, Secretary of State in the time of Louis XIII, was one of these, and I could mention others. These lay-brothers take the same vows as the

others, according to their situation in life: they promise absolute obedience to the heads of the Order, but the vows of poverty and chastity are not taken, because of the work they are to render. The lay-brother must tell his confessor whatever he finds out and, if the confessor thinks it wise, tell the heads. He must also obey the commands given him through the confessor. The services of these secret helpers are of great value to the Jesuits.

Père Tellier had persuaded the King long before his death, it is said, to join the Society in this manner, saying that it was a sure means of attaining salvation; whatever crimes a man might commit, he was assured of absolution, provided that he remained faithful to the vows. It is further stated that during the last days of the King, Père Tellier was heard reminding him of his vows, and repeating the promises made; that he made him recite prayers that left no doubt he had been made a member of the Order. The last blessing was given as to a member. It was said, besides, that the King wore an almost invisible scapulary in token of his membership. This was found on his body after his death.

Those who knew the King best were sure that he trusted to the indirect penance he had forced on others (the Huguenots, the Jansenists, the defenders of our rights against the claims of Italy, anybody, in short, who would not agree with the Jesuits), and that this was the cause of his peace of mind in those awful moments which usually shake the confidence even of those who sincerely repent and have led a relatively pure life. These unknown Jesuits render valuable service in promising salvation, without repentance or penance, without making restitution, no matter how wickedly the sinner may have lived. This is an abominable doctrine which deludes the sinner up to the very moment of death, and conducts him in peace along a path strewn with flowers to the grave — in return for purely material advantages.

So died one of the greatest of mortal rulers, in the arms of a low-born and unrecognised wife and of the offspring of his sin; receiving the Sacraments from the son of a beloved mistress, and consolation from the Père Tellier. He may have died the death of a saint, though a saint's death-bed is not as a rule surrounded by such persons.

These persons did not continue their attentions up to the bitter end. So long as there was anything to be got out of the King they were most pressing in their attentions, but after he signed the codicil they could no longer bear the sad scene. They showed no sense of shame in leaving it. The hope expressed by the King of being joined soon by Mme. de Maintenon was not at all pleasant to the old witch who, not content with being a queen, evidently thought she should be immortal. Four days before his death she left him, and though she returned when he became anxious over her absence, she had not the patience to wait for the end before she once more returned to St. Cyr, this time without coming back. Satisfied

with their success in preventing the return of the Cardinal de Noailles, Bissy and Rohan took no more trouble; as a matter of fact, Rohan ceased to say Mass, and unless Charost had intervened, the King would not have heard it again, though he was quite conscious and, when asked, expressed a wish to hear it.

M. du Maine gave signal proofs of the goodness of his heart, and of filial gratitude and love: he was present when the Provençal gave his elixir to the King, and spoke roughly to Fagon. The same evening he described the scene to friends with his inimitable wit, and mimicked Fagon, who was astonished at being so treated by a peasant, bending over, muttering but not daring to say another word aloud for fear of a new attack. This affectionate son told the story so amusingly that his friends roared with laughter, in which he himself joined. At the happy prospect of his coming greatness he had not stopped to consider how unbecoming this merriment was at such a time, but it did not escape the notice of those in the Gallery, who plainly heard it. M. du Maine wasted little time at the King's bedside; the scene was too much for his tender nature, so he shut himself in his room where he could find consolation in his crucifix, and also have leisure to think of what should be done to secure the advantages that had been granted him.

Père Tellier soon tired of waiting on the dying man. He had nothing more to hope or fear, so he set himself to other duties and was so frequently absent that Bloin and Maréchal were angry and frequently sent for him on their own responsibility. Sometimes when the King asked for him he could not be found; and when he at last came he stayed for only a few minutes, even as the King was on the point of death, when one would have thought that a confessor ought never to be absent from the bedside. But Christian charity, gratitude, and love were not the supreme virtues of this great impostor; he had no desire to give the last offices to a dying man. Indeed, he lacked the necessary qualifications.

Speaking of Père Tellier, I must in all justice add that I asked Maréchal about the Jesuit vows the King was said to have taken. Maréchal, who was truth personified and not in the least friendly toward Père Tellier, assured me that he had never seen any scapulary on the King, nor overheard any special kind of prayer or benediction. He did not believe there was any truth in the story. Yet, although he was most assiduous in his attentions, he was not always at the bedside, so that it is possible that Père Tellier was on his guard. Still, I think it hardly possible for a story of that kind to be true without Maréchal's suspicions being aroused.

I now have only to describe the daily routine of the life of Louis XIV, as I saw it during the twenty-two years I spent at his Court. Such details concerning an epoch so near our own day may seem dull, but these are just the things that are most quickly forgotten. How we regret that

writers in the past have not undertaken a similar task (though useless for their contemporaries) of describing them for posterity. It will be hard to avoid repetition, but I shall try to do so.

I need not speak of his mode of living when he was with the army, for the etiquette, had of course, to be varied according to circumstances. I may say that none but persons of a certain rank were allowed at his table. If one could hope for that honour, it was necessary to apply through the First Gentleman of the Chamber; if the answer was favourable, one came next day to the King at the dinner-hour, and the King said, "Sit down to table, monsieur." It was understood that after being admitted one might have the honour of dining at his table at pleasure, but naturally this privilege had to be used discreetly. Military rank alone was not enough. I have already told how M. de Vauban, though old and a distinguished general, was allowed at the King's table for the first time only at the end of the siege of Namur, and considered that he had been highly honoured. Simple colonels, on the other hand, if of distinguished birth, were readily admitted. Everyone wore his hat at these dinners; not to wear it would have been considered disrespectful, and one would have been reminded of it at once. Monseigneur himself invariably wore his hat; the King was the only one who did not. One took it off when the King addressed one, or in speaking to Monseigneur or Monsieur, but to the royal Princes it was necessary only to raise it.

This is what I saw myself at the siege of Namur. The seats near the King were for persons of title, and then came the higher officers. If any seats were vacant when dinner began, all moved up until they were filled. The King sat in an arm-chair; while the others, including Monseigneur and Monsieur, sat on chairs covered with black leather, which could be folded up. The Marshals, even when on active service, had no precedence over the Dukes; all took their seats without special order being observed. But everyone had to apply through the First Gentleman of the Chamber if he had not already been admitted to the table. The royal Princes were the only exceptions to the rule. No men, not even the Princes, except on active service, ever sat down to dine with the King.

As for the Court routine, every morning at eight o'clock the King was wakened by his First *Valet-de-Chambre*, who had slept in the room; at the same time the First Physician and First Surgeon were admitted, and the King's former wet-nurse, so long as she lived. She advanced and kissed him; the others then rubbed him down and often changed his shirt, since he perspired freely. At a quarter past eight the Grand Chamberlain was summoned, and the courtiers who had the privilege of being present. The Chamberlain drew back the curtains of the bed, which had been drawn again, and offered him holy water from a basin near the head of the bed. At this time any courtier who had a favour to ask or wished to speak to the King might do so, and in that case the others stood back.

The same person who opened the curtains gave the King the Office of the Holy Ghost; he then went back to the next room with the rest of the courtiers. After reciting the Office, which is short, the King summoned them in again and put on his dressing-gown. Meanwhile the second group were admitted and a few minutes later, the courtiers in general. The King was then putting on his breeches. (He put on nearly all his clothes himself, cleverly and gracefully.) He was shaved every other day, in the presence of the courtiers; on such occasions he wore a short wig, which he always wore in his bedroom before other persons. He wore it even in bed on days when he had taken medicine. During these processes he talked occasionally to those about him, on matters of hunting or some similar topic. There was no dressing-table near him, so a servant held up a looking-glass.

After dressing was over, he said prayers at the side of his bed, all the churchmen kneeling down, while the laymen remained standing. Then he went into his private chamber, followed by all who were permitted and, as there were many appointments which gave the privilege, they were numerous. Then he gave the orders of the day, that everyone might know to the quarter hour what the King would be doing during the entire day. Then all left the room except the illegitimate sons, Montchevreuil and d'O (their former governors), Mansart, and in later years d'Antin; and the valets; these had all entered by the back door, not through the chamber. They took this opportunity of speaking with the King. Plans for gardens and buildings were discussed, at greater or less length, depending on the number of things the King had to discuss.

Meanwhile the courtiers waited in the Gallery until the King went to Mass, where the choir always sang a motet. The ministers were assembled while the King was in the chapel, and gathered in the King's room, where persons of rank might go and speak with them. There was small delay after the King returned from Mass; he ordered the Council to assemble immediately. The morning's work was then done. Some Council met every day in the week except Thursdays and Fridays, or if on those days it was very seldom. Thursday morning was nearly always open, though sometimes the King had private audiences then. As a rule it was then that he had secret conferences with persons who had been introduced by the back entrance. Friday morning after Mass was the hour for the confessor, who occasionally stayed with the King until dinner. The usual time for dinner was one o'clock, but when there was no meeting it was sometimes earlier, if the King were going hunting. If the Council was still sitting at one, dinner was kept waiting, and no announcement was made of it.

The King dined alone in his bedroom (*au petit couvert*), on a square table set opposite the middle window. The food was more or less plentiful, depending on whether he had ordered *petit couvert* or *très-petit couvert*, but even this last consisted of several dishes and three courses, not including

dessert. As soon as the table was brought in, the chief courtiers were admitted, and later those who were known. The First Gentleman informed the King that dinner was ready. I have on rare occasions seen Monseigneur and his sons stand during dinner without the King asking them to be seated; but the royal Princes and Cardinals invariably stood. I have often seen Monsieur there; he would hand the King his napkin and then remain standing. If the King saw that he did not intend to go away, he asked him to sit down; Monsieur then bowed, and the King ordered a seat brought. The King would say, "Brother, please be seated"; whereupon Monsieur again bowed and sat down until dinner was over, when he again offered the napkin.

When Monsieur had come from St. Cloud, the King sometimes asked him to dine. If he accepted, a place was laid for him at the end of the table, and the Grand Chamberlain or First Gentleman served him just as he served the King. Monsieur received this service with conspicuous politeness. When dining with the King he talked a good deal, and the conversation waxed lively. Generally the King spoke little at dinner, saying only a word to those about him, unless one of his familiar nobles were present; in which case he talked somewhat more. Dinner was seldom *au grand couvert*; that was only on some principal holidays, and once in a while at Fontainebleau, when the English Queen was present. Ladies were not present at the *petit couvert*, except very rarely the Maréchale de la Mothe, who had this privilege because of having brought in the royal children when she was governess.

The King went into his private chamber after dinner, where he amused himself by feeding and playing with his dogs. Then he changed clothes in the presence of a few persons of rank, admitted by the First Gentleman, and went by his private staircase to the Marble Court and thence to his carriage. Anyone might speak to him between the foot of the stairs and the carriage, and also when he came back. He liked fresh air, and when deprived of it he suffered from headache, which was originally brought on by an excessive use of scents. For many years he had taken a dislike to all perfumes except orange-flower water, and those who came into his presence had to be very careful on this score.

Neither heat nor cold inconvenienced him, nor even rain, and only the worst weather could prevent him from going out daily. Once a week at least, and oftener at Marly or Fontainebleau, he hunted the stag. Once or twice a week he went shooting in his parks, especially on Sunday and holidays, when there were no works for him to inspect, and he did not like to take many people with him. No one in the kingdom handled a gun better than he. On the other days he went out to look at the operations in his gardens and buildings; and on occasion he took ladies for excursions, offering trips in the open air in the woods at Marly or Fontainebleau. He used sometimes to take the whole Court to walk round the canal at

Fontainebleau, a magnificent sight. Several courtiers rode horseback. He had no one with him in his walks but the principal court officers, except when he was at the gardens of Versailles. This was not very often, but when he was there, courtiers were allowed to follow him. This was also true at the gardens of Trianon, if he were staying there, but not if he went there from Versailles intending to return on the same day. When at Marly the guests might accompany him on his walk, or not, as they chose; they were at liberty to do just as they pleased. When walking in the Versailles gardens, he was the only person who wore his hat, but a special privilege was allowed at Marly; when the King went out he said, "Gentlemen, your hats!" and all put on their hats; he would have been put out if anyone had delayed for a single moment.

The privilege of going on a stag-hunt was more general. Anyone at Fontainebleau might go who pleased; but elsewhere only those who had the *justaucorps-à-brevet*, or who had secured permission for all occasions. The King liked to have some people about him when he was hunting, but too many interfered with his sport. He was pleased when others enjoyed hunting, but considered it absurd to go if it afforded no pleasure. He was not at all annoyed with those who did not go with him when he hunted. So it was with card-playing: he liked to play at lansquenet for high stakes, and wished the game to go on continually in the salon at Marly. He also liked other games to be played at several tables, but no one was asked to play unless he wished it. At Fontainebleau when it rained, he liked to watch people playing tennis, a game he had himself played very well in earlier days.

Days when no Council was held, he occasionally went to dine at Trianon or Marly with the Duchess of Burgundy, Mme. de Maintenon, and certain other ladies. After the meal a minister would come on business, and when that was over (in summer-time) he would spend the whole afternoon walking with the ladies, or playing cards. He often ran a lottery for them, with no blanks: this was a polite way of making them presents, like plate, goods for dresses, or jewellery of more or less value — to make it rather a matter of chance. Mme. de Maintenon drew like the others, but nearly always made a present of what she won.

Supper was served at ten — always *au grand couvert*, and the family sat with him, as well as a number of courtiers, men and women, both those who were privileged to be seated and others. The second evening before the King went to Marly any lady who wished might attend his supper. This custom was called "presenting oneself for Marly." The men introduced themselves on the same day in the morning, going to the King and saying simply, "Marly, Sire." During the last days of his life this ceremony bothered the King, so that a valet was put in the Gallery to mark down the names of those who wished to go. But the ladies continued to "present" themselves to the very last.

The King stood a few minutes with his back to the balustrade at the end of his bed after supper, surrounded by the whole Court; then, with a bow to the ladies, he retired to his own room. He remained there not quite an hour with his children and grandchildren, both the legitimate and the illegitimate; he sat in one chair and Monsieur in another. Privately, Monsieur lived with the King simply as a brother. Monseigneur always stood, as the other Princes stood; the Princesses sat on stools. The ladies-of-honour to the Princesses would wait in the Council-chamber, next to the King's private chamber; but at Fontainebleau, where there was only one large salon, those ladies who were entitled to sit were with the Princesses, sitting in the same line and on stools like theirs. The other ladies were behind the circle where they stood, or, if they preferred they might sit on the floor; several made use of this privilege. The talk usually turned on hunting or other unimportant matters.

Before going to bed the King would feed his dogs; and on coming back said good-night and went to his room, where he said his prayers. After undressing, he made a slight bow, as though to say good-night. Then the courtiers retired. As they were going out, he stood by the fireplace and gave the password to the Captain of the Guards.

This was the so-called *grand coucher*. Next came the *petit coucher*, to which only those who were allowed to attend the *grandes entrées* were admitted. It was very brief. During it one might speak to the King; if one went to him, the others at once went out, leaving him with the King. After a prolonged attack of gout which the King suffered ten or twelve years before his death, the *grand coucher* was omitted, and for all courtiers (except those who had the *grandes entrées*) the routine of the day was over after the King left the table.

At least once a month he took physic. On such days he heard Mass in bed, and only the Almoners and those who had the *entrées* were present. Later M. du Maine and Mme. de Maintenon came in to entertain him, together with the Comte de Toulouse. He remained only a short while. Mme. de Maintenon sat in a chair near the bed; and M. du Maine, who was lame, sat on a stool by the bed so long as no one but Mme. de Maintenon or his brother were present. It was at such times that he went to special trouble to amuse them, and often he told excellent anecdotes. The King had his dinner in bed at three, and then got up. The rest of the day was spent in the usual way.

The King missed Mass only once in his life, and that was when he was with the army, during a long march. And he never failed to keep a fast-day, except on the rare occasions when he was actually ill. A few days before Lent he would make a sort of address at the *lever*, stating that he would be greatly displeased if anyone had invited guests to a dinner at which meat was served. He frowned upon those who ate meat while dining together; these must not exceed one dish of meat, roast or boiled. These

rites were strictly kept; and anyone who broke them quickly felt the King's displeasure. The rules applied also to Paris, and the Lieutenant of Police saw that they were carried out, and even reported to him. During the last twelve or fifteen years of his life the King did not keep Lent too strictly, but began by reducing the facts to four days a week, and later to three, besides the last four days of Holy Week. But on days when meat was served his *très-petit couvert* was much reduced; and on Good Friday, though he had *grand couvert* in the morning and the evening, it consisted altogether of vegetables, without even fish.

Rarely did he miss a sermon in Advent or Lent, and never the services in Holy Week. He was most respectful in church; at Mass everyone was required to kneel at the Sanctus, and remain so until the priest had communicated. He was much displeased if there was any noise, or he heard talking during service. He received Communion five times a year and wore the insignia of the Order; on Easter Eve he received it at the church, on the other days in the chapel; these were the eves of Pentecost, All Saints, Christmas, and Assumption. On each occasion he laid hands on the sick. On Thursday of Holy Week he served the poor at dinner; and after supper he went into the tribune at the Elevation of the Host, and retired afterward. At Mass he used to tell his beads, having never learned to do more than that. He knelt the whole time, except during the reading of the text.

He always wore a coat of some shade of brown, with little embroidery on it, sometimes nothing but a gold button, sometimes with black velvet trimmings. His waistcoat was of red, blue, or green satin, with much embroidery. He wore no rings nor precious jewels, except in his shoe buckles and garters. He wore a white feather in his hat, which was edged with Spanish lace. He generally wore his blue ribbon under his coat, except at weddings and suchlike festivities, when he wore it outside. It was long, and richly decorated with precious jewels. He was the only member of the royal family to wear the ribbon underneath, and very few of the chevaliers imitated him. Today it is exceptional to wear it outside the coat. The chevaliers who are qualified conceal the ribbon because they are ashamed of the others who wear it; the rest since they are too timid to wear it at all.

Until the appointments of 1661, all the chevaliers appeared in the full regalia of the Order at the three yearly ceremonies. They all communicated. This custom was established by command of Henri III, to exclude the Huguenots. To force courtiers to receive Communion together three times a year with great public pomp, was a dangerous and disagreeable practice, which was rightly abolished; but the ceremony of making offering, now performed only by the King, was most imposing. The forbidding of full dress has shorn the thing of all its magnificence.

The King went to St. Germain at least once every two weeks, even after the death of James II. The Court of St. Germain also came often to

Versailles, but more frequently to Marly, and often for supper. The courtiers were invited to all ceremonial occasions and shown much honour. The King's attentions to the King and Queen of England were superb and kingly on all occasions. He would remain in the salon at Marly, standing for a quarter of an hour and then go to the King's rooms or those of Mme. de Maintenon. King Louis never entered the salon except to pass through it, or perhaps on occasion for a few minutes to watch the young King of England or the Elector of Bavaria, who were playing cards. Birthdays and other family occasions, so strictly observed in most Courts, were not celebrated at the French Court, hence I have had no occasion to speak of them.

Louis XIV was regretted by few persons except his personal servants and the leaders in the affair of the Constitution. Mme. de Maintenon was worn out by the task of finding occupation and amusement for him since the death of the Dauphine. Hence, having got from him all she wanted on behalf of M. du Maine, his death came as a relief to her. The dullness of her existence at St. Cyr caused her regret later on, but having no influence then, the time has not come to describe her last years. M. du Maine was, as I have said, so delighted at the prospect of power that he was unbecomingly joyful. His cold and calm brother was quite unmoved. Mme. la Duchesse has always been blamed for having no heart, but only a gizzard; her relations with the King had for long been characterised by fear and constraint. She wanted nothing from him, she knew he was on M. du Maine's side in their difference over the inheritance of M. le Prince, and she detested Mme. de Maintenon. The King's death was therefore a relief, and she took no pains to conceal her feelings. I was somewhat surprised at the Duchesse d'Orléans, for I imagined she would be really grieved: I saw no signs of sorrow beyond a few tears, which always flowed on the smallest excuse. She took to her bed for a short time (which she always liked), and remained in a sort of obscurity, which was also pleasing to her. But the curtains were opened soon again, and she showed no more signs of mourning except when it occurred to her occasionally that she ought to keep up appearances.

The Marshal de Villeroy and the Duchesse de Ventadour made a little show of grief, but hardly anyone else took the trouble. There were a few dull old courtiers, like Dangeau and Cavoye, who felt they had lost everything that made life worth while. They regretted that they would no longer be able to play their parts among fools, strangers and foreigners, in the daily routine of amusements of that Court which ended with the death of the King.

The courtiers in general were of two classes: some, looking for new chances to push their way forward and cut a figure in the world, were delighted at the close of a reign under which they had nothing to hope; others, tired of existing under a yoke imposed by the ministers far more

than by the King himself, felt a sense of relief; they were all eager for a change and happy to be released from a life of perpetual restraint.

The people of Paris hoped to regain freedom of some sort and rejoiced in the downfall of so many who had abused their power. The provinces, ruined and helpless, learned of the King's death with great joy; and the Parlement and judiciary, for so long held under by edicts and arbitrary decrees, rejoiced in the prospect of freedom. The common people, ground down and in despair, openly gave thanks to God for the deliverance they felt sure was at hand.

Foreign nations, though glad to be rid of a King they had long feared and who had escaped as though by a miracle at the moment when they believed they had conquered him, concealed their feelings with more decorum than the French. The marvellous achievements of the early years of the King's long reign, and the stoicism with which he bore his later misfortunes called forth their admiration, and they honoured him by giving to him after his death the praise they had withheld during his life. Not one foreign Court exulted; all vied with each other in honouring his memory.

The Emperor went into mourning as though for his own father; and though four or five months elapsed between the King's death and the Carnival, all amusements were forbidden in Vienna. This decree was scrupulously obeyed, with one shocking exception: toward the end of the Carnival the Comte de Luc, French Ambassador, shamelessly gave a ball to please some ladies. This did not add to the honour in which he was held at Vienna; no notice was taken of his conduct in France; it was treated with silent contempt.

Regarding our ministers, provincial intendants, financiers and those of less account, they felt deeply the loss they had suffered. We shall see whether the French people were right or wrong in the feelings they showed on this occasion, and whether the kingdom gained or lost through the death of Louis XIV.

JOHN MILTON

1608-1674

By AUGUSTINE BIRRELL¹ (1850-)



It is now more than sixty years ago since Mr. Carlyle took occasion to observe, in his *Life of Schiller*, that, except the *Newgate Calendar*, there was no more sickening reading than the biographies of authors.

Allowing for the vivacity of the comparison, and only remarking, with reference to the *Newgate Calendar*, that its compilers have usually been very inferior wits, in fact attorneys, it must be owned that great creative and inventive genius, the most brilliant gifts of bright fancy and happy expression, and a glorious imagination, well-nigh seeming as if it must be inspired, have too often been found most unsuitably lodged in ill living and scandalous mortals. Though few things, even in what is called Literature, are more disgusting than to hear small critics, who earn their bite and sup by acting as the self-appointed showmen of the works of their betters, heaping terms of moral opprobrium upon those whose genius is, if not exactly a lamp unto our feet, at all events a joy to our hearts, — still, not even genius can repeal the Decalogue, or re-write the sentence of doom, 'He which is filthy, let him be filthy still.' It is therefore permissible to wish that some of our great authors had been better men.

It is possible to dislike John Milton. Men have been found able to do so, and women too; among these latter his daughters, or one of them at least, must even be included. But there is nothing sickening about his biography, for it is the life of one who early consecrated himself to the service of the highest Muses, who took labour and intent study as his portion, who aspired himself to be a noble poem, who, Republican though he became, is what Carlyle called him, the moral king of English literature.

Milton was born in Bread Street, Cheapside, on the 9th of December, 1608. This is most satisfactory, though indeed what might have been expected. There is a notable disposition nowadays, amongst the meaner-minded provincials, to carp and gird at the claims of London to be considered the mother-city of the Anglo-Saxon race, to regret her pre-eminence, and sneer at her fame. In the matters of municipal government, gas, water, fog, and snow, much can be alleged and proved against the English

¹ Reprinted from *Obiter Dicta*, London, 1887, by permission of the publisher.

capital, but in the domain of poetry, which I take to be a nation's best guaranteed stock, it may safely be said that there are but two shrines in England whither it is necessary for the literary pilgrim to carry his cockle hat and shoon — London, the birthplace of Chaucer, Spenser, Ben Jonson, Milton, Herrick, Pope, Gray, Blake, Keats, and Browning, and Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of Shakespeare. Of English poets it may be said generally they are either born in London or remote country places. The large provincial towns know them not. Indeed, nothing is more pathetic than the way in which these dim, destitute places hug the memory of any puny whipster of a poet who may have been born within their statutory boundaries. This has its advantages, for it keeps alive in certain localities fames that would otherwise have utterly perished. Parnassus has forgotten all about poor Henry Kirke White, but the lace manufacturers of Nottingham still name him with whatever degree of reverence they may respectively consider to be the due of letters. Manchester is yet mindful of Dr. John Byrom. Liverpool clings to Roscoe.

Milton remained faithful to his birth-city, though, like many another Londoner, when he was persecuted in one house he fled into another. From Bread Street he moved to St. Bride's Churchyard, Fleet Street; from Fleet Street to Aldersgate Street; from Aldersgate Street to the Barbican; from the Barbican to the south side of Holborn; from the south side of Holborn to what is now called York Street, Westminster; from York Street, Westminster, to the north side of Holborn; from the north side of Holborn to Jewin Street; from Jewin Street to his last abode in Bunhill Fields. These are not vain repetitions if they serve to remind a single reader how all the enchantments of association lie about him. Englishwomen have been found searching about Florence for the street where George Eliot represents Romola as having lived, who have admitted never having been to Jewin Street, where the author of *Lycidas* and *Paradise Lost* did in fact live.

Milton's father was the right kind of father, amiable, accomplished, and well-to-do. He was by business what was then called a scrivener, a term which has received judicial interpretation, and imported a person who arranged loans on mortgage, receiving a commission for so doing. The poet's mother, whose baptismal name was Sarah (his father was, like himself, John), was a lady of good extraction, and approved excellence and virtue. We do not know very much about her, for the poet was one of those rare men of genius who are prepared to do justice to their fathers. Though Sarah Milton did not die till 1637, she only knew her son as the author of *Comus*, though it is surely a duty to believe that no son would have poems like *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* in his desk, and not at least once produce them and read them aloud to his mother. These poems, though not published till 1645, were certainly composed in his mother's life. She died before the troubles began, the strife and contention in which

her well-graced son, the poet, the dreamer of all things beautiful and cultured, the author of the glancing, tripping measure —

*'Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful jollity' —*

was destined to take a part, so eager and so fierce, and for which he was to sacrifice twenty years of a poet's life.

The poet was sent to St. Paul's School, where he had excellent teaching of a humane and expanding character, and he early became, what he remained until his sight left him, a strenuous reader and a late student.

*'Or let my lamp at midnight hour
Be seen on some high, lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear.'*

Whether the maid who was told off by the elder Milton to sit up till twelve or one o'clock in the morning for this wonderful Pauline realized that she was a kind of doorkeeper in the house of genius, and blessed accordingly, is not known, and may be doubted. When sixteen years old Milton proceeded to Christ's College, Cambridge, where his memory is still cherished; and a mulberry-tree, supposed in some way to be his, rather unkindly kept alive. Milton was not a submissive pupil; in fact, he was never a submissive anything, for there is point in Dr. Johnson's malicious remark, that man in Milton's opinion was born to be a rebel, and woman a slave.

But in most cases, at all events, the rebel did well to be rebellious, and perhaps he was never so entirely in the right as when he protested against the slavish traditions of Cambridge educational methods in 1625.

Universities must, however, at all times prove disappointing places to the young and ingenuous soul, who goes up to them eager for literature, seeing in every don a devotee to intellectual beauty, and hoping that lectures will, by some occult process — the *genius loci* — initiate him into the mysteries of taste and the storerooms of culture. And then the improving conversation, the flashing wit, the friction of mind with mind, — these are looked for, but hardly found; and the young scholar groans in spirit, and perhaps does as Milton did — quarrels with his tutor. But if he is wise he will, as Milton also did, make it up again, and get the most that he can from his stony-hearted stepmother before the time comes for him to bid her his *Vale, vale, et æternum vale*.

Milton remained seven years at Cambridge — from 1625 to 1632 — from his seventeenth to his twenty-fourth year. Any intention or thought he ever may have had of taking orders he seems early to have rejected with a characteristic scorn. He considered a state of subscription to articles a state of slavery, and Milton was always determined, whatever else he was or might become, to be his own man. Though never in sympathy

with the governing tone of the place, there is no reason to suppose that Milton (any more than others) found this lack seriously to interfere with a fair amount of good solid enjoyment from day to day. He had friends who courted his society, and pursuits both grave and gay to occupy his hours of study and relaxation. He was called the 'Lady' of his college, on account of his personal beauty and the purity and daintiness of his life and conversation.

After leaving Cambridge Milton began his life, so attractive to one's thoughts, at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, where his father had a house in which his mother was living. Here, for five years, from his twenty-fourth to his twenty-ninth year — a period often stormy in the lives of poets — he continued his work of self-education. Some of his Cambridge friends appear to have grown a little anxious, on seeing one who had distinction stamped upon his brow, doing what the world calls nothing; and Milton himself was watchful, and even suspicious. His second sonnet records this state of feeling:

*'How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'eth.'*

And yet no poet had ever a more beautiful springtide, though it was restless, as spring should be, with the promise of greater things and 'high midsummer pomps.' These latter it was that were postponed almost too long.

Milton at Horton made up his mind to be a great poet — neither more nor less; and with that end in view he toiled unceasingly. A more solemn dedication of a man by himself to the poetical office cannot be imagined. Everything about him became, as it were, pontifical, almost sacramental. A poet's soul must contain the perfect shape of all things good, wise, and just. His body must be spotless and without blemish, his life pure, his thoughts high, his studies intense. There was no drinking at the 'Mermaid' for John Milton. His thoughts, like his joys, were not those that are in widest commonalty spread. When in his walks he met the Hodge of his period, he is more likely to have thought of a line in Virgil than of stopping to have a chat with the poor fellow. He became a student of the Italian language, and writes to a friend: 'I who certainly have not merely wetted the tip of my lips in the stream of these (the classical) languages, but in proportion to my years have swallowed the most copious draughts, can yet sometimes retire with avidity and delight to feast on Dante, Petrarch, and many others; nor has Athens itself been able to confine me to the transparent waves of its Ilissus, nor ancient Rome to the banks of its Tiber, so as to prevent my visiting with delight the streams of the Arno and the hills of Fiesolæ.'

Now it was that he, in his often-quoted words written to the young Deodati, doomed to an early death, was meditating 'an immortality of fame,' letting his wings grow and preparing to fly. But dreaming though he ever was of things to come, none the less, it was at Horton he composed *Comus*, *Lycidas*, *L'Allegro*, and *Il Penseroso*, poems which enable us half sadly to realise how much went and how much was sacrificed to make the author of *Paradise Lost*.

After five years' retirement Milton began to feel the want of a little society, of the kind that is 'quiet, wise, and good,' and he meditated taking chambers in one of the Inns of Court, where he could have a pleasant and shady walk under 'immemorial elms,' and also enjoy the advantages of a few choice associates at home and an elegant society abroad. The death of his mother in 1637 gave his thoughts another direction, and he obtained his father's permission to travel to Italy, 'that woman country, wooed not wed,' which has been the mistress of so many poetical hearts, and was so of John Milton's. His friends and relatives saw but one difficulty in the way. John Milton the younger, though not at this time a Nonconformist, was a stern and unbending Protestant, and was as bitter an opponent of His Holiness the Pope as he certainly would have been, had his days been prolonged, of His Majesty the Pretender.

There is something very characteristic in this almost inflamed hostility in the case of a man with such love of beauty and passion for architecture and music as always abided in Milton, and who could write:

*'But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters' pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim, religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before my eyes.'*

Here surely is proof of an æsthetic nature beyond most of our modern raptures; but none the less, and at the very same time, Rome was for Milton the 'grim wolf' who, 'with privy paw, daily devours apace.' It is with a sigh of sad sincerity that Dr. Newman admits that Milton breathes through his pages a hatred of the Catholic Church, and consequently the Cardinal feels free to call him a proud and rebellious creature of God. That Milton was both proud and rebellious cannot be disputed. Nonconformists need not claim him for their own with much eagerness. What

he thought of Presbyterians we know, and he was never a church member, or indeed a church-goer. Dr. Newman has admitted that the poet Pope was an unsatisfactory Catholic; Milton was certainly an unsatisfactory Dissenter. Let us be candid in these matters. Milton was therefore bidden by his friends, and by those with whom he took counsel, to hold his peace whilst in Rome about the 'grim wolf,' and he promised to do so, adding, however, the Miltonic proviso that this was on condition that the Papists did not attack his religion first. 'If anyone,' he wrote, 'in the very city of the Pope attacked the orthodox religion, I defended it most freely.' To call the Protestant religion, which had not yet attained to its second century, the orthodox religion under the shadow of the Vatican was to have the courage of his opinions. But Milton was not a man to be frightened of schism. That his religious opinions should be peculiar probably seemed to him to be almost inevitable, and not unbecoming. He would have agreed with Emerson, who declares that would man be great he must be a Nonconformist.

There is something very fascinating in the records we have of Milton's one visit to the Continent. A more impressive Englishman never left our shores. Sir Philip Sidney perhaps approaches him nearest. Beautiful beyond praise, and just sufficiently conscious of it to be careful never to appear at a disadvantage, dignified in manners, versed in foreign tongues, yet full of the ancient learning — a gentleman, a scholar, a poet, a musician, and a Christian — he moved about in a leisurely manner from city to city, writing Latin verses for his hosts and Italian sonnets in their ladies' albums, buying books and music, and creating, one cannot doubt, an all too flattering impression of an English Protestant. To travel in Italy with Montaigne or Milton, or Evelyn or Gray, or Shelley, or, pathetic as it is, with the dying Sir Walter, is perhaps more instructive than to go there for yourself with a tourist's ticket. Old Montaigne, who was but forty-seven when he made his journey, and whom therefore I would not call old had not Pope done so before me, is the most delightful of travelling companions, and as easy as an old shoe. A humaner man than Milton, a wiser man than Evelyn — with none of the constraint of Gray, or the strange, though fascinating, outlandishness of Shelley — he perhaps was more akin to Scott than any of the other travellers; but Scott went to Italy an overwhelmed man, whose only fear was he might die away from the heather and the murmur of Tweed. However, Milton is the most improving companion of them all, and amidst the impurities of Italy, 'in all the places where vice meets with so little discouragement, and is protected with so little shame,' he remained the Milton of Cambridge and Horton, and did nothing to pollute the pure temple of a poet's mind. He visited Paris, Nice, Genoa, Pisa, and Florence, staying in the last city two months, and living on terms of great intimacy with seven young Italians, whose musical names he duly records. These were the months of

August and September, not nowadays reckoned safe months for Englishmen to be in Florence — modern lives being raised in price. From Florence he proceeded through Siena to Rome, where he also stayed two months. There he was present at a magnificent entertainment given by the Cardinal Francesco Barberini in his palace, and heard the singing of the celebrated Leonora Baroni. It is not for one moment to be supposed that he sought an interview with the Pope, as Montaigne had done, who was exhorted by His Holiness 'to persevere in the devotion he had ever manifested in the cause of the Church;' and yet perhaps Montaigne by his essays did more to sap the authority of Peter's chair than Milton, however willing, was able to do.

It has been remarked that Milton's chief enthusiasm in Italy was not art, but music, which falls in with Coleridge's *dictum*, that Milton is not so much a picturesque as a musical poet — meaning thereby, I suppose, that the effects which he produces and the scenes which he portrays are rather suggested to us by the rhythm of his lines than by actual verbal descriptions. From Rome Milton went to Naples, whence he had intended to go to Sicily and Greece; but the troubles beginning at home he forewent this pleasure, and consequently never saw Athens, which was surely a great pity. He returned to Rome, where, troubles or no troubles, he stayed another two months. From Rome he went back to Florence, which he found too pleasant to leave under two more months. Then he went to Lucca, and so to Venice, where he was very stern with himself, and only lingered a month. From Venice he went to Milan, and then over the Alps to Geneva, where he had dear friends. He was back in London in August, 1639, after an absence of fifteen months.

The times were troubled enough. Charles I., whose literary taste was so good that one must regret the mischance that placed a crown upon his comely head, was trying hard, at the bidding of a priest, to thrust Episcopacy down Scottish throats, who would not have it at any price. He was desperately in need of money, and the House of Commons (which had then a *raison d'être*) was not prepared to give him any except on terms. Altogether it was an exciting time, but Milton was in no way specially concerned in it. Milton looms so large in our imagination amongst the figures of the period that, despite Dr. Johnson's sneers, we are apt to forget his political insignificance, and to fancy him curtailing his tour and returning home to take his place amongst the leaders of the Parliament men. Return home he did, but it was, as another pedagogue has reminded us, to receive boys 'to be boarded and instructed.' Dr. Johnson tells us that we ought not to allow our veneration for Milton to rob us of a joke at the expense of a man 'who hastens home because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and when he reaches the scene of action vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding-school;' but that this observation was dictated by the good Doctor's spleen is made plain by

his immediately proceeding to point out, with his accustomed good sense, that there is really nothing to laugh at, since it was desirable that Milton, whose father was alive and could only make him a small allowance, should do something, and there was no shame in his adopting an honest and useful employment.

To be a Parliament man was no part of the ambition of one who still aspired to be a poet; who was not yet blind to the heavenly vision; who was still meditating what should be his theme, and who in the meantime chastised his sister's sons, unruly lads, who did him no credit and bore him no great love.

The Long Parliament met in November, 1640, and began its work — brought Strafford to the scaffold, clapped Laud into the Tower, Archbishop though he was, and secured as best they could the permanency of Parliamentary institutions. None of these things specially concerned John Milton. But there also uprose the eternal Church question, 'What sort of Church are we to have?' The fierce controversy raged, and 'its fair enticing fruit,' spread round 'with liberal hand,' proved too much for the father of English epic.

*'He scrupled not to eat
Against his better knowledge.'*

In other words, he commenced pamphleteer, and between May, 1641, and the following March he had written five pamphlets against Episcopacy, and used an intolerable deal of bad language, which, however excusable in a heated controversialist, ill became the author of *Comus*.

The war broke out in 1642, but Milton kept house. The 'tented field' had no attractions for him.

In the summer of 1643 he took a sudden journey into the country, and returned home to his boys with a wife, the daughter of an Oxfordshire Cavalier. Poor Mary Powell was but seventeen, her poetic lord was thirty-five. From the country-house of a rollicking squire to Aldersgate Street, was somewhat too violent a change. She had left ten brothers and sisters behind her, the eldest twenty-one, the youngest four. As one looks upon this picture and on that, there is no need to wonder that the poor girl was unhappy. The poet, though keenly alive to the subtle charm of a woman's personality, was unpractised in the arts of daily companionship. He expected to find much more than he brought of general good-fellowship. He had an ideal ever in his mind of both bodily and spiritual excellence, and he was almost greedy to realize both, but he knew not how. One of his complaints was that his wife was mute and insensate, and sat silent at his board. It must, no doubt, have been deadly dull, that house in Aldersgate Street. Silence reigned, save when broken by the cries of the younger Phillips sustaining chastisement. Milton had none of that noble humanitarian spirit which had led Montaigne long years before

him to protest against the cowardly traditions of the schoolroom. After a month of Aldersgate Street, Mrs. Milton begged to go home. Her wish was granted, and she ran back to her ten brothers and sisters, and when her leave of absence was up refused to return. Her husband was furiously angry; and in a time so short as almost to enforce the belief that he began the work during the honeymoon, was ready with his celebrated pamphlet, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce restored to the good of both sexes*. He is even said, with his accustomed courage, to have paid attentions to a Miss Davis, who is described as a very handsome and witty gentlewoman, and therefore not one likely to sit silent at his board; but she was a sensible girl as well, and had no notion of a married suitor. Of Milton's pamphlet it is everyone's duty to speak with profound respect. It is a noble and passionate cry for a high ideal of married life, which, so he argued, had by inflexible laws been changed into a drooping and disconsolate household captivity, without refuge or redemption. He shuddered at the thought of a man and woman being condemned, for a mistake of judgment, to be bound together to their unspeakable wearisomeness and despair, for, he says, not to be beloved and yet retained is the greatest injury to a gentle spirit. Our present doctrine of divorce, which sets the household captive free on payment of a broken vow, but on no less ignoble terms, is not founded on the congruous, and is indeed already discredited, if not disgraced.

This pamphlet on divorce marks the beginning of Milton's mental isolation. Nobody had a word to say for it. Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Independent held his doctrine in as much abhorrence as did the Catholic, and all alike regarded its author as either an impracticable dreamer or worse. It was written certainly in too great haste, for his errant wife, actuated by what motives cannot now be said, returned to her allegiance, was mindful of her plighted troth, and, suddenly entering his room, fell at his feet and begged to be forgiven. She was only nineteen, and she said it was all her mother's fault. Milton was not a sour man, and though perhaps too apt to insist upon repentance preceding forgiveness, yet when it did so he could forgive divinely. In a very short time the whole family of Powells, whom the war had reduced to low estate, were living under his roof in the Barbican, whither he moved on the Aldersgate house proving too small for his varied belongings. The poet's father also lived with his son.

Mrs. Milton had four children, three of whom, all daughters, lived to grow up. The mother died in childbirth in 1652, being then twenty-six years of age.

The *Areopagitica*, a *Speech for Unlicensed Printing*, followed the divorce pamphlet, but it also fell upon deaf ears. Of all religious sects the Presbyterians, who were then dominant, are perhaps the least likely to forego the privileges of interference in the affairs of others. Instead of the Arch-

bishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, instead of 'a lordly Imprimatur, one from Lambeth House, another from the west end of Paul's, there was appointed a commission of twenty Presbyterians to act as State Licensers. Then was Milton's soul stirred within him to a noble rage. His was a threefold protest — as a citizen of a State he fondly hoped had been free, as an author, and as a reader. As a citizen he protested against so unnecessary and improper an interference. It is not, he cried, 'the unfrocking of a priest, the unmitring of a bishop, that will make us a happy nation,' but the practice of virtue, and virtue means freedom to choose. Milton was a manly politician, and detested with his whole soul grandmotherly legislation. 'He who is not trusted with his own actions, his drift not being known to be evil, and standing to the hazard of law and penalty, has no great argument to think himself reputed in the commonwealth wherein he was born, for other than a fool or a foreigner.' 'They are not skilful considerers of human things who imagine to remove sin by removing the matter of sin.' 'And were I the chooser, a dram of well-doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil doing.' These are texts upon which sermons, not inapplicable to our own day, might be preached. Milton has made our first parent so peculiarly his own, that any observations of his about Adam are interesting. 'Many there be that complain of Divine Providence for suffering Adam to transgress. Foolish tongues! When God gave him reason He gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had been else a mere artificial Adam. We ourselves esteem not of that obedience a love or gift which is of force. God therefore left him free, set before him a provoking object ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence.' So that according to Milton even Eden was a state of trial. As an author, Milton's protest has great force. 'And what if the author shall be one so copious of fancy as to have many things well worth the adding come into his mind after licensing, while the book is yet under the press, which not seldom happens to the best and diligentest writers, and that perhaps a dozen times in one book? The printer does not go beyond his licensed copy. So often then must the author trudge to his leave-giver that those his new insertions may be viewed, and many a jaunt will be made ere that licenser — for it must be the same man — can either be found, or found at leisure; meanwhile either the press must stand still, which is no small damage, or the author lose his accuratest thoughts, and send forth the book worse than he made it, which to a diligent writer is the greatest melancholy and vexation that can befall.'

Milton would have had no licensers. Every book should bear the printer's name, and 'mischievous and libellous books' were to be burnt by the common hangman, not as an effectual remedy, but as the 'most effectual remedy man's prevention can use.'

The noblest pamphlet in 'our English, the language of men ever famous and foremost in the achievements of liberty,' accomplished nothing, and its author must already have thought himself fallen on evil days.

In the year 1645, the year of Naseby, as Mr. Pattison reminds us, appeared the first edition of Milton's Poems. Then, for the first time, were printed *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, the *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, and various of the sonnets. The little volume also contained *Comus* and *Lycidas*, which had been previously printed. With the exception of three sonnets and a few scraps of translation, Milton had written nothing but pamphlets since his return from Italy. At the beginning of the volume, which is a small octavo, was a portrait of the poet, most villainously executed. He was really thirty-seven, but flattered himself, as men of that age will, that he looked ten years younger; he was therefore much chagrined to find himself represented as a grim-looking gentleman of at least fifty. The way he revenged himself upon the hapless artist is well known. The volume, with the portrait, is now very scarce, almost rare.

In 1647 Milton removed from the Barbican, both his father and his father-in-law being dead, to a smaller house in Holborn, backing upon Lincoln's Inn Fields, close to where the Inns of Court Hotel now stands, and not far from the spot which was destined to witness the terrible tragedy which was at once to darken and glorify the life of one of Milton's most fervent lovers, Charles Lamb. About this time he is supposed to have abandoned pedagogy. The habit of pamphleteering stuck to him; indeed, it is one seldom thrown off. It is so much easier to throw off the pamphlets.

In 1649 Milton became a public servant, receiving the appointment of Latin Secretary to the Council of Foreign Affairs. He knew some member of the Committee, who obtained his nomination. His duties were purely clerkly. It was his business to translate English despatches into Latin, and foreign despatches into English. He had nothing whatever to do with the shaping of the foreign policy of the Commonwealth. He was not even employed in translating the most important of the State papers. There is no reason for supposing that he even knew the leading politicians of his time. There is a print one sees about, representing Oliver Cromwell dictating a foreign despatch to John Milton; but it is all imagination, nor is there anything to prove that Cromwell and Milton, the body and soul of English Republicanism, were ever in the same room together, or exchanged words with one another. Milton's name does not occur in the great history of Lord Clarendon. Whitelocke, who was the leading member of the Committee which Milton served, only mentions him once. Thurloe spoke of him as a blind man who wrote Latin letters. Richard Baxter, in his folio history of his Life and Times, never mentions Milton at all. He was just a clerk in the service of the Commonwealth, of a scholarly

bent, peculiar habit of thought, and somewhat of an odd temper. He was not the man to cultivate great acquaintances, or to fritter away his time waiting the convenience of other people. When once asked to use his influence to obtain for a friend an appointment, he replied he had no influence, '*propter paucissimas familiaritates meas cum gratiosis, qui domi fere, idque libenter, me contineo.*' The busy great men of the day would have been more than astonished, they would have been disgusted, had they been told that posterity would refer to most of them compendiously, as having lived in the age of Milton. But this need not trouble us.

On the Continent Milton enjoyed a wider reputation on account of his controversy with the great European scholar, Salmasius, on the sufficiently important and interesting, and then novel, subject of the execution of Charles I. Was it justifiable? Salmasius, a scholar and a Protestant, though of an easy-going description, was employed, or rather, as he had no wages (Milton's hundred *Jacobuses* being fictitious), nominated by Charles, afterwards the Second, to indict the regicides at the bar of European opinion, which accordingly he did in the Latin language. The work reached this country in the autumn of 1649, and it evidently became the duty of somebody to answer it. Two qualifications were necessary—the replier must be able to read Latin, and to write it after a manner which should escape the ridicule of the scholars of Leyden, Geneva, and Paris. Milton occurred to somebody's mind, and the task was entrusted to him. It is not to be supposed that Cromwell was ever at the pains to read Salmasius for himself, but still it would not have done to have it said that the *Defensio Regia* of so celebrated a scholar as Salmasius remained unanswered, and so the appointment was confirmed, and Milton, no new hand at a pamphlet, set to work. In March, 1651, his first *Defence of the English People* was in print. In this great pamphlet Milton asserts, as against the doctrine of the divine right of kings, the undisputed sovereignty of the people; and he maintains the proposition that, as well by the law of God, as by the law of nations, and the law of England, a king of England may be brought to trial and death, the people being discharged from all obligations of loyalty when a lawful prince becomes a tyrant, or gives himself over to sloth and voluptuousness. This noble argument, alike worthy of the man and the occasion, is doubtless over-clouded and disfigured by personal abuse of Salmasius, whose relations with his wife had surely as little to do with the head of Charles I., as had poor Mr. Dick's memorial. Salmasius, it appears, was henpecked, and to allow yourself to be henpecked was, in Milton's opinion, a high crime and misdemeanour against humanity, and one which rendered a man infamous, and disqualified him from taking part in debate.

It has always been reported that Salmasius, who was getting on in years, and had many things to trouble him besides his own wife, perished in the effort of writing a reply to Milton, in which he made use of lan-

guage quite as bad as any of his opponent's; but it now appears that this is not so. Indeed, it is generally rash to attribute a man's death to a pamphlet, or an article, either of his own or anybody else's.

Salmasius, however, died, though from natural causes, and his reply was not published till after the Restoration, when the question had become, what it has ever since remained, academical.

Other pens were quicker, and to their productions Milton, in 1654, replied with his *Second Defence of the English People*, a tract containing autobiographical details of immense interest and charm. By this time he was totally blind, though, with a touch of that personal sensitiveness ever characteristic of him, he is careful to tell Europe, in the *Second Defence*, that externally his eyes were uninjured, and shone with an unclouded light.

Milton's *Defences of the English People* are rendered provoking by his extraordinary language concerning his opponents. 'Numskull,' 'beast,' 'fool,' 'puppy,' 'knave,' 'ass,' 'mongrel-cur,' are but a few of the epithets employed. This is doubtless mere matter of pleading, a rule of the forum where controversies between scholars are conducted; but for that very reason it makes the pamphlets as provoking to an ordinary reader as an old bill of complaint in Chancery must have been to an impatient suitor who wanted his money. The main issues, when cleared of personalities, are important enough, and are stated by Milton with great clearness. 'Our king made not us, but we him. Nature has given fathers to us all, but we ourselves appointed our own king; so that the people is not for the king, but the king for them.' It was made a matter of great offence amongst monarchs and monarchical persons that Charles was subject to the indignity of a trial. With murders and poisonings kings were long familiar. These were part of the perils of the voyage, for which they were prepared, but, as Salmasius put it, 'for a king to be arraigned in a court of judicature, to be put to plead for his life, to have sentence of death pronounced against him, and that sentence executed,' — oh! horrible impiety. To this Milton replies: 'Tell me, thou superlative fool, whether it be not more just, more agreeable to the rules of humanity and the laws of all human societies, to bring a criminal, be his offence what it will, before a court of justice, to give him leave to speak for himself, and if the law condemns him, then to put him to death as he has deserved, so as he may have time to repent or to recollect himself; then presently, as soon as ever he is taken, to butcher him without more ado?'

But a king of any spirit would probably answer that he preferred to have his despotism tempered by assassination than by the mercy of a court of John Miltons. To which answer Milton would have rejoined, 'Despotism, I know you not, since we are as free as any people under heaven.'

The weakest part in Milton's case is his having to admit that the

Parliament was overawed by the army, which he says was wiser than the senators.

Milton's address to his countrymen, with which he concludes the first defence, is veritably in his grand style:

'He has gloriously delivered you, the first of nations, from the two greatest mischiefs of this life — tyranny and superstition. He has endured you with greatness of mind to be First of Mankind, who after having confined their own king and having had him delivered into their hands, have not scrupled to condemn him judicially, and pursuant to that sentence of condemnation to put him to death. After performing so glorious an action as this, you ought to do nothing that's mean and little; you ought not to think of, much less do, anything but what is great and sublime. Which to attain to, this is your only way: as you have subdued your enemies in the field, so to make it appear that you of all mankind are best able to subdue Ambition, Avarice, the love of Riches, and can best avoid the corruptions that prosperity is apt to introduce. These are the only arguments by which you will be able to evince that you are not such persons as this fellow represents you, traitors, robbers, murderers, parricides, madmen, that you did not put your king to death out of any ambitious design — that it was not an act of fury or madness, but that it was wholly out of love to your liberty, your religion, to justice, virtue, and your country, that you punished a tyrant. But if it should fall out otherwise (which God forbid), if, as you have been valiant in war, you should grow debauched in peace, and that you should not have learnt, by so eminent, so remarkable an example before your eyes, to fear God, and work righteousness; for my part I shall easily grant and confess (for I cannot deny it), whatever ill men may speak or think of you, to be very true. And you will find in time that God's displeasure against you will be greater than it has been against your adversaries — greater than His grace and favour have been to yourselves, which you have had larger experience of than any other nation under heaven.'

This controversy naturally excited greater interest abroad, where Latin was familiarly known, than ever it did here at home. Though it cost Milton his sight, or at all events accelerated the hour of his blindness, he appears greatly to have enjoyed conducting a high dispute in the face of Europe. 'I am,' so he says, 'spreading abroad amongst the cities, the kingdoms, and nations, the restored culture of civility and freedom of life.' We certainly manage in this affair of the execution of Charles to get rid of that note of insularity which renders our politics uninviting to the stranger.

Milton, despite his blindness, remained in the public service until after the death of Cromwell; in fact, he did not formally resign until after the Restoration. He played no part, having none to play, in the performances that occurred between those events. He poured forth pamphlets, but there

is no reason to believe that they were read otherwise than carelessly and by few. His ideas were his own, and never had a chance of becoming fruitful. There seemed to him to be a ready and an easy way to establish a free Commonwealth, but on the whole it turned out that the easiest thing to do was to invite Charles Stuart to reascend the throne of his ancestors, which he did, and Milton went into hiding.

It is terrible to think how risky the situation was. Milton was undoubtedly in danger of his life, and *Paradise Lost* was unwritten. He was for a time under arrest. But after all he was not one of the regicides — he was only a scribe who had defended regicide. Neither was he a man well associated. He was a solitary, and, for the most part, an unpopular thinker, and blind withal. He was left alone for the rest of his days. He lived first in Jewin Street, off Aldersgate Street, and finally in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields. He had married, four years after his first wife's death, a lady who died within a twelvemonth, though her memory is kept ever fresh, generation after generation, by her husband's sonnet beginning,

'Methought I saw my late espoused saint.'

Dr. Johnson, it is really worth remembering, called this a poor sonnet. In 1664 Milton married a third and last wife, a lady he had never seen, and who survived her husband for no less a period than fifty-three years, not dying till the year 1727. The poet's household, like his country, never realized any of his ideals. His third wife took decent care of him, and there the matter ended. He did not belong to the category of adored fathers. His daughters did not love him — it seems even probable they disliked him. Mr. Pattison has pointed out that Milton never was on terms even with the scholars of his age. Political acquaintances he had none. He was, in Puritan language, 'unconnected with any place of worship,' and had therefore no pastoral visits to receive, or sermons to discuss. The few friends he had were mostly young men who were attracted to him, and were glad to give him their company; and it is well that he had this pleasure, for he was ever in his wishes a social man — not intended to live alone, and blindness must have made society little short of a necessity for him.

Now it was, in the evening of his days, with a Stuart once more upon the throne, and Episcopacy finally installed, that Milton, a defeated thinker, a baffled pamphleteer — for had not Salmasius triumphed? — with Horton and Italy far behind him, set himself to keep the promise of his glorious youth, and compose a poem the world should not willingly let die. His manner of life was this. In summer he rose at four, in winter at five. He went to bed at nine. He began the day with having the Hebrew Scriptures read to him. Then he contemplated. At seven his man came to him again, and he read and wrote till an early dinner. For exer-

cise he either walked in the garden or swung in a machine. Besides conversation, his only other recreation was music. He played the organ and the bass viol. He would sometimes sing himself. After recreation of this kind he would return to his study to be read to till six. After six his friends were admitted, and would sit with him till eight. At eight he had his supper — olives or something light. He was very abstemious. After supper he smoked a pipe of tobacco, drank a glass of water, and went to bed. He found the night a favourable time for composition, and what he composed at night he dictated in the day, sitting obliquely in an elbow chair with his leg thrown over the arm.

In 1664 *Paradise Lost* was finished, but as in 1665 came the Great Plague, and after the Great Plague the Great Fire, it was long before the MS. found its way into the hands of the licenser. It is interesting to note that the first member of the general public who read *Paradise Lost*, I hope all through, was a clergyman of the name of Tomkyns, the deputy of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Sheldon. The Archbishop was the State Licensor for religious books, but of course did not do the work himself. Tomkyns did the work, and was for a good while puzzled what to make of the old Republican's poem. At last, and after some singularly futile criticisms, Tomkyns consented to allow the publication of *Paradise Lost*, which accordingly appeared in 1667, admirably printed, and at the price of 3s. a copy. The author's agreement with the publisher is in writing — as Mr. Besant tells us all agreements with publishers should be — and may be seen in the British Museum. Its terms are clear. The poet was to have £5 down; another £5 when the first edition, which was not to exceed 1,500 copies, was sold; a third £5 when a second edition was sold; and a fourth and last £5 when a third edition was sold. He got his first £5, also his second, and after his death his widow sold all her rights for £8. Consequently £18, which represents perhaps £50 of our present currency, was Milton's share of all the money that has been made by the sale of his great poem. But the praise is still his. The sale was very considerable. The 'general reader' no doubt preferred the poems of Cleaveland and Flatman, but Milton found an audience which was fit and not fewer than ever is the case when noble poetry is first produced.

Paradise Regained was begun upon the completion of *Paradise Lost*, and appeared with *Samson Agonistes* in 1671, and here ended Milton's life as a producing poet. He lived on till Sunday, 8th November, 1674, when the gout, or what was then called gout, struck in and he died, and was buried beside his father in the Church of St. Giles's, Cripplegate. He remained laborious to the last, and imposed upon himself all kinds of drudgery, compiling dictionaries, histories of Britain and Russia. He must have worked not so much from love of his subjects as from dread of idleness. But he had hours of relaxation, of social intercourse, and of music; and it is pleasant to remember that one pipe of tobacco. It consecrates your own.

Against Milton's great poem it is sometimes alleged that it is not read; and yet it must, I think, be admitted that for one person who has read Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, ten thousand might easily be found who have read *Paradise Lost*. Its popularity has been widespread. Mr. Mark Pattison and Mr. John Bright measure some ground between them. No other poem can be mentioned which has so coloured English thought as Milton's, and yet, according to the French senator whom Mr. Arnold has introduced to the plain reader, '*Paradise Lost* is a false poem, a grotesque poem, a tiresome poem.' It is not easy for those who have a touch of Milton's temper, though none of his genius, to listen to this foreign criticism quite coolly. Milton was very angry with Salmasius for venturing to find fault with the Long Parliament for having repealed so many laws, and so far forgot himself as to say, '*Nam nostræ leges, Ole, quid ad te?*' But there is nothing municipal about *Paradise Lost*. All the world has a right to be interested in it and to find fault with it. But the fact that the people for whom primarily it was written have taken it to their hearts and have it on their lips ought to have prevented it being called tiresome by a senator of France.

But what is the matter with our great epic? That nobody ever wished it longer is no real accusation. Nobody ever did wish an epic longer. The most popular books in the world are generally accounted too long — *Don Quixote*, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Tom Jones*. But, says Mr. Arnold, the whole real interest of the poem depends upon our being able to take it literally; and again, 'Merely as a matter of poetry, the story of the Fall has no special force or effectiveness — its effectiveness for us comes, and can only come, from our taking it all as the literal narrative of what positively happened.' These bewildering utterances make one rub one's eyes. Carlyle comes to our relief: 'All which propositions I for the present content myself with modestly, but peremptorily and irrevocably denying.'

Mr. Pattison surely speaks the language of ordinary good sense when he writes: 'For the world of *Paradise Lost* is an ideal, conventional world quite as much as the world of the *Arabian Nights*, or the world of the chivalrous romance, or that of the pastoral novel.'

Coleridge, in the twenty-second chapter of the *Biographia Literaria*, points out that the fable and characters of *Paradise Lost* are not derived from Scripture, as in the *Messiah* of Klopstock, but merely suggested by it — the illusion on which all poetry is founded being thus never contradicted. The poem proceeds upon a legend, ancient and fascinating, and to call it a commentary upon a few texts in Genesis is a marvellous criticism.

The story of the Fall of Man, as recorded in the Semitic legend, is to me more attractive as a story than the Tale of Troy, and I find the rebellion of Satan and his dire revenge more to my mind than the circles of Dante. Eve is, I think, more interesting than 'Heaven-born Helen, Sparta's queen' — I mean in herself, and as a woman to write poetry about.

The execution of the poem is another matter. So far as style is concerned its merits have not yet been questioned. As a matter of style and diction, Milton is as safe as Virgil. The handling of the story is more vulnerable. The long speeches put in the mouth of the Almighty are never pleasing, and seldom effective. The weak point about argument is that it usually admits of being answered. For Milton to essay to justify the ways of God to man was well and pious enough, but to represent God Himself as doing so by argumentative process was not so well, and was to expose the Almighty to possible rebuff. The king is always present in his own courts, but as judge, not as advocate; hence the royal dignity never suffers.

It is narrated of an eminent barrister, who became a most polished judge, Mr. Knight Bruce, that once, when at the very head of his profession, he was taken in before a Master in Chancery, an office since abolished, and found himself pitted against a little snip of an attorney's clerk, scarce higher than the table, who, nothing daunted, and by the aid of authorities he cited from a bundle of books as big as himself, succeeded in worsting Knight Bruce, whom he persisted in calling over and over again 'my learned friend.' Mr. Bruce treated the imp with that courtesy which is always an opponent's due, but he never went before the Masters any more.

The Archangel has not escaped the reproach often brought against affable persons of being a bit of a bore, and though this is to speak unbecomingly, it must be owned that the reader is glad whenever Adam plucks up heart of grace and gets in a word edgeways. Mr. Bagehot has complained of Milton's angels. He says they are silly. But this is, I think, to intellectualize too much. There are some classes who are fairly exempted from all obligation to be intelligent, and these airy messengers are surely amongst that number. The retinue of a prince or of a bride justify their choice if they are well-looking and group nicely.

But these objections do not touch the main issue. Here is the story of the loss of Eden, told enchantingly, musically, and in the grand style. 'Who,' says M. Scherer, in a passage quoted by Mr. Arnold, 'can read the eleventh and twelfth books without yawning?' People, of course, are free to yawn when they please, provided they put their hands to their mouths; but in answer to this insulting question one is glad to be able to remember how Coleridge has singled out Adam's vision of future events contained in these books as specially deserving of attention. But to read them is to repel the charge.

There was no need for Mr. Arnold, of all men, to express dissatisfaction with Milton:

*'Words which no ear ever to hear in heaven
Expected; least of all from thee, ingrate,
In place thyself so high above thy peers.'*

The first thing for people to be taught is to enjoy great things greatly. The spots on the sun may be an interesting study, but anyhow the sun is not all spots. Indeed, sometimes in the early year, when he breaks forth afresh,

*'And winter, slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of spring,*

we are apt to forget that he has any spots at all, and, as he shines, are perhaps reminded of the blind poet sitting in his darkness, in this prosaic city of ours, swinging his leg over the arm of his chair, and dictating the lines:

*'Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom or summer's rose,
Or flocks or herds, or human face divine.
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me — from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off; and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of nature's works, to me expunged and razed,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather, Thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inwards, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate — there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.'*

Coleridge added a note to his beautiful poem, 'The Nightingale,' lest he should be supposed capable of speaking with levity of a single line in Milton. The note was hardly necessary, but one loves the spirit that prompted him to make it. Sainte-Beuve remarks: 'Parler des poètes est toujours une chose bien délicate, et surtout quand on l'a été un peu soi-même.' But though it does not matter what the little poets do, great ones should never pass one another without a royal salute.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON

1642-1726

By LOUIS FIGUIER¹ (1819-1894)



NEWTON is regarded as the finest scientific genius of the Eighteenth Century. He completed the work of Kepler, and explained the mechanism of the world by means of an all-inclusive, absolute law which permits of no exception. Making use of the astronomical and mathematical theories evolved by his predecessors, and thanks to the new Infinite Calculus which was his own invention, he demonstrated the existence of the universal principle of attraction or gravity, which governs all matter, from the invisible atom to the immense globes that revolve through the heavens, fixing for all time the law by which gravity operates.

He brought unity into our conception of the universe; he shed light upon the grandeur and beauty of its mechanism; and far from minimising the function of the Supreme Author of Nature, he placed Him so high and revealed in Him so great a power, that he instilled in mankind an added admiration and respect.

Newton was not alone a man who dealt in the abstract; he was also concerned with the practical. He was an experimenter of the first order as well as a great philosopher, and herein lies the secret of his superiority over other men of genius, such as Descartes and Leibniz. He carried to perfection the art of observing, of correlating facts, of segregating the essential from the incidental, of passing from the particular to the general, and of deducing the laws of physical phenomena. His discoveries in the realm of optics testify to the truth of this statement.

If Newton had his peers in the mathematical sciences, he was at least not surpassed by anyone.

Voltaire, who was one of the first in France to adopt Newton's views, proclaimed the glory of the great scientist in these terms: "Ye intimates of the All-Highest, eternal substances that flash from His eyes and protect with thy wings the throne where thy master sits among ye, say, are ye not jealous of the great Newton?"

Praise like this, from such a man, is surely a brevet of immortality.

Isaac Newton was born at Woolsthorpe, a village in the County of Lincoln, parish of Colsterworth, on December 25th, 1642, the very year of

¹ Translated, for the first time into English, by Barrett H. Clark, from the third volume of Figuiet's *Vies des Savants illustres*, Paris, 1870.

Galileo's death. Born, like Kepler, before his time, he came into the world with a weak constitution, though this did not prevent his living to the age of eighty-four.

His father, who worked a small farm in the district, had died before Isaac's birth, a few months after his marriage. When the child was in his third year his mother, Henrietta Ayscough, married Barnabe Smith, rector of North Whitam. Isaac was put under the care of his grandmother, who saw that he received the rudiments of primary instruction in the schools of the neighboring villages.

At the age of twelve, he was sent to Grantham, the nearest town to Woolsthorpe, in order to follow a more extended course. Yet his mother had no intention of making a scholar of him: she wished only to have him learn enough to be able to manage the little property her husband had left him as a patrimony.

The young man at first showed no signs of being what we should call a good student. On his own authority, we know that he paid little attention to what his teachers said, and was one of the poorest students in his class. But a fortunate thing occurred one day to arouse his ambition and stimulate what had been wanting, a desire to excel; this quickly brought him into the front rank of students. One of his comrades, somewhat older than he, had struck him a violent blow in the stomach. He sought to take revenge on the bully by outstripping him in his studies, and from that time forward, applied himself so efficaciously that shortly afterward he was the honor pupil at Grantham. That blow in the stomach was not without its compensations.

Newton revealed ere long a marked interest in mechanics, and for that reason he rarely engaged in those activities which are usual with boys of his age. Whenever he had a spare hour he would seek out the apothecary, Clark, in whose house he lived, and in the laboratory give free rein to his passion for chemistry and physics, with whatever utensils he could lay hands on, and with great skill construct models for various machines. We are told that among other things he made a water clock, a mechanical carriage that actually ran, and a windmill. He got the idea of this last while out walking in the neighbourhood of Grantham, where a new sort of windmill had just been erected. The youthful inventor had added to his model a mechanical mouse, which was made a part of the whole machine. He called this mouse the miller, because it ate the grain given to it.

At another time he took it into his head to send up a kite, during the night, to which he had attached a lantern, in order that people might think a new comet had appeared. It is evident that Newton liked to mystify the ignorant country-folk.

One will doubtless be surprised to learn that with his predilection for mechanics, the young Newton cultivated the Muse. It is none the less true. Toward the close of his stay at Grantham, he wrote several rhymed pieces, which are today much sought after by collectors.

Since some knowledge of drawing was needful toward the realization of his mechanical inventions, the young man set about learning it, with no other master than himself. His progress was so rapid that before long the walls of his room were covered with drawings, either of his own composition, or copies.

While thus occupied at Grantham, Isaac had reached the age of fifteen, when his mother was forced to take him out of school. She had just lost her second husband through death, and her income no longer permitted her to pay for Isaac's education. She returned therefore to Woolsthorpe, with a son by her second husband, and with Isaac, to whom she immediately entrusted the management of his small inheritance.

This task could hardly have been other than uncongenial to a youth who had made so favorable a beginning with his education. His inclinations by no means lay in the direction of farming and labor, and for this reason he went about the performance of his duties in a half-hearted fashion. Every Saturday he went to Grantham to sell at market the products of his farm, but because of his youth, his mother sent an old servant with him to advise him in the matter of selling. But scarcely had he dismounted from his horse, leaving the servant to dispose of his products as he thought best, before he hastened to the home of his former host, the apothecary Clark, where he buried himself in some old book, taken from the library. Sometimes, with even less ceremony, he would dismount before he reached the town, and stopping under a tree or behind a hedge, sit down to read and study. His companion would then go on alone to market, and on his way back, finding Isaac where he had left him, the two would return to the farm together.

At Woolsthorpe, as formerly at Grantham, Isaac amused himself by contriving little mechanical devices. There is shown to this day a little sun-dial of his which he had placed over against the wall of his house. J. B. Biot, the illustrious biographer of Newton, has himself seen this interesting souvenir of the great man's youthful efforts.

Newton's mother was at last induced to allow the boy to pursue his study of science without interruption, and this is the way it came about.

One day Isaac was seen by one of his uncles, book in hand, completely lost in meditation. Curious to know what it was that held him so enthralled, he took the book from the youth, and saw that Isaac was working at a problem in mathematics. Surprised to discover that a boy of sixteen was thus concerned with so serious a thing, the good man was fortunate enough to persuade Isaac's mother to cease opposing her son's vocation. A most unusual kind of uncle, who assuredly deserves to be remembered by posterity.

Newton was therefore sent back to school in Grantham, where he remained until he was eighteen. From there he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was admitted in June, 1661.

At the time he entered Cambridge the eminent Dr. Barrow was Professor of Mathematics. In order to prepare himself for Barrow's lectures, Newton set to work studying Saunderson's *Logic* and Kepler's *Treatise on Optics*; then Descartes' *Geometry* — which he quickly mastered; and the works of Wallis, in particular the remarkable treatise *De Arithmetica infinitorum*. He was at this time twenty-one. It was during the next two years that he made his most wonderful discoveries in the field of mathematical analysis.

In January 1665, Newton became a Bachelor of Arts, but some few months later he was forced to leave Cambridge, fearing an epidemic which was raging throughout the town. He returned to Woolsthorpe to await the end of the epidemic, and did not go to Cambridge again until the autumn of 1666.

It was during this last sojourn at his home that the famous incident of the apple took place: the fabulous anecdote tells how the apple falling on Newton's head, leading to the discovery of the law of universal gravity.

During the years 1666, 1667, and 1668 Newton continued his academic work, and was ultimately appointed to replace Dr. Barrow, as Professor of Mathematics and Physics, since the Doctor was thenceforward confining himself exclusively to theology.

Newton performed his professorial duties with the utmost zeal. We are told that during the twenty-six years between 1669 and 1695, he was never absent from the University for more than one month — the time of vacation — in any year. He lived in the college, and received an annual salary of a hundred pounds, and his only official duty was to deliver a public lecture of an hour's duration once a week, and to consult four hours a week with such students as asked him to hear them. It is evident that he had ample time to devote to his own special work.

In 1671 Sethward, Bishop of Salisbury, known for his astronomical labors, proposed to the Royal Society of London to admit Newton as a member. Newton had not yet published anything, but his work was becoming known: great expectations were based on the remarkable talents of the young Cambridge professor, who was elected to the Society on January 11th, 1672, on which occasion he addressed that body by describing a new kind of reflecting telescope, and at the same time demonstrating it by means of a model. This selfsame model, constructed by Newton's own hands, is preserved to this day in a case at the Royal Society's buildings.

In spite of his knowledge and genius, Newton was at that time far from affluent. He was, as a matter of fact, so poor that, finding himself unable to pay the dues required from all members of the Royal Society, he sent in his resignation to Oldenburg, the secretary. It was not, however, accepted; and Newton, being relieved of his obligation, remained a member of the group of which he was destined to become the most illustrious ornament.

On April 27th, 1675, Newton obtained from the King another dispensation. In order to hold a professorship at Trinity College it was necessary to take religious orders. To do this would have seriously inconvenienced the great scientist, who fortunately secured permission to continue his work without submitting to the rule.

There belongs in this place an incident in Newton's life that reveals an aspect of it altogether different from anything we have hitherto perceived. There was in this scientist a political being as well. King James II was determined to establish the Catholic religion as the dominating faith of England. In accordance with this policy he had commanded the University of Cambridge to confer upon a Benedictine Monk of the name of Francis, the degree of Bachelor of Arts, without his being obliged to take the "Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy" prescribed by the University statutes. Jealous of its privileges, the University refused to obey. At first it protested by letter, but eventually issued a categorical refusal, despite the King's threats. Newton, who had shown great firmness throughout the controversy, was sent to London with many of his colleagues, to defend before the high court of justice the prerogatives of the University. These delegates showed such remarkable firmness before the court that the King deemed it prudent to drop the whole matter.

In order to give their young colleague a striking proof of gratitude (or perhaps it was solely on the grounds of merit?) the professors of Cambridge, who had the right to send one member to Parliament, chose Newton.

His election came in 1688. It must be confessed that he played a very unimportant rôle in the House: there was nothing of the popular tribune or legislator in this profound thinker. During his term of office of 1688-9 he discharged his duties regularly and in a conscientious manner, though between 1690 and 1695 he was less actively interested, and missed many sittings. He spoke but once, and that was only in order to ask that the page should close a window, the draft from which might, he feared, give a cold to a speaker then delivering his peroration. Reserve could hardly go beyond this.

Shortly after his election, Newton's mother died and his own health began to be impaired. A lack of appetite and frequent accessions of insomnia attest only too clearly to the fact that he was in a dangerous condition. An accident occurred about this time that served to intensify it, and give it a serious turn that could not easily be exaggerated. It exercised a deep and lasting influence upon the intellectual faculties of a man who had become the pride of all England.

One evening as he left his room to attend chapel service, he carelessly left a lighted candle on his desk. In his absence his little dog Diamond, to which he was fondly attached, upset the candle, and all the papers on the desk were destroyed by fire. It was precisely these papers on which New-

ton had written down the results of all the chemical experiments he had been making for the past several years. His despair can be easily imagined. Biot believes that Newton's intellect was seriously affected by the shock. He writes, indeed, that after the age of forty-five, Newton made no new discovery in any of the sciences, which would be strange in any man of genius who had just reached that period when the mind is ordinarily at the very height of its maturity.

The French writer was seeking an explanation of this strange circumstance, when a Hollander, M. Van Swinden, sent him a MS. note of Huygens, which was taken from a sort of diary, belonging to the Leyden Library, in which the famous Dutch geometrician was used to jot down various remarks. The note in question furnishes a key to the mystery surrounding Newton's mental sterility during the period now under consideration. It reads as follows:

"On May 29th, 1694, M. Colin, a Scotsman, told me that the illustrious geometrician Isaac Newton suffered from a form of dementia eighteen months ago, occasioned either by overwork or because of his grief caused by the fire in his laboratory that destroyed many of his important MSS. M. Colin added that after the accident, Newton called on the Archbishop of Cambridge, and showed by his manner of speaking that he was mentally unbalanced; whereupon his friends took him in charge and sought to effect a cure. They shut him within his rooms and administered remedies by force, and by this means cured him, so that now he has begun work again on his book, the *Principia*."

Biot assumes from this that the temporary eclipse of Newton's faculties explains the sterility of new ideas during the second half of his scientific career.

Biot's assumption is vigorously attacked by the English biographer of Newton, Sir David Brewster, the distinguished physicist, who died in 1868. Brewster raises the issue to the proportions of a national question. To maintain, he declares, that Newton was insane for eighteen months, and that the attack left his mind forever clouded, is in his opinion an attempt against the glory of the immortal philosopher. With this opinion I cannot concur. For all one is a genius, one is no less a man, and subject as such to the inexorable laws of nature. It is not so very surprising that Newton should at one time have been temporarily unbalanced, and surely this is nothing that can possibly deprive him of the glory of his discoveries.

It should be added that Brewster was not fortunate in his choice of arguments. In order to prove that Newton was perfectly sane in the year 1693 he cited letters which prove precisely that he was not. One of these, addressed to the philosopher Locke, leaves no possible room for doubt.

Locke was very intimate with Newton, but his treatise *On the Human Understanding* had aroused the antagonism of the English theologians.

A second edition of the work was announced in 1693, and Newton took occasion to express himself freely on the subject of his friend and his philosophical opinions. Doubtless he was sorry for this, for a short while after, he sent Locke the curious letter that follows:

"Sir, — Being of opinion that you endeavored to embroil me with women, and by other means, I was so much affected with it, as that when one told me you were sickly and would not live, I answered, 'twere better if you were dead. I desire you to forgive me this uncharitableness; for I am now satisfied that what you have done is just, and I beg your pardon for my having had thoughts of you for it, and for representing that you struck at the root of morality, in a principle you laid in your book of ideas, and designed to pursue in another book, and that I took you for a Hobbist. I beg your pardon also for saying or thinking that there was a design to sell me an office, or to embroil me. — I am your most humble and unfortunate servant,

Is. Newton."

At the Bull, in Shoreditch, London

Sept. 16th, 1693."

It is easy to imagine the stupefaction of Locke on receiving such a letter. But he replied to it, on the 5th of October, assuring Newton of his friendship, and offering to come to see him, "for," he says, "the conclusion of your letter makes me apprehend it would not be wholly useless to you."

The pity inspired in him by his friend's condition is here evident. The same day Newton replied to him from Cambridge, in the following letter:

"Sir, — The last winter, by sleeping too often by my fire, I got an ill habit of sleeping; and a distemper, which this summer has been epidemical, put me farther out of order, so that when I wrote to you, I had not slept an hour a night for a fortnight together, and for five days together not a wink. I remember I wrote to you, but what I said of your book I remember not. If you please to send me a transcript of that passage, I will give you an account of it if I can. — I am your most humble servant.

Is. Newton."

With this last letter the question may rest. Newton himself declares, in 1693, that he had completely lost his memory.

Newton had triumphed over all the objections raised against his successive discoveries; his glory shone over England and all Europe; yet at the age of fifty he lived in poverty. In order to exist and be able to purchase all the materials necessary for his scientific work, his entire income was insufficient: it consisted solely of his modest salary as a Professor at Cambridge. It was clearly the duty of his native country to help him, and this duty was fulfilled by a former Cambridge student, Charles Mon-

tague, later known as the Count of Halifax. Though some years younger than Newton, Montague had known him first at Cambridge and later in the House of Commons. When Montague was made Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1694, he appointed his friend Warden of the Mint with a salary of £600. Some years later, in 1669, Newton was made Director-in-chief, with a salary of £1500.

Voltaire comments brilliantly on this matter (in his *Philosophical Dictionary*):

"I had imagined, when I was young, that Newton had made his fortune through his merits. I thought that the court and the city of London had by loud acclaim appointed him Director of the National Mint. I was quite in the wrong. Isaac Newton had a very charming niece, Miss Conduitt, who was mightily pleasing to the Chancellor Halifax. Calculus and gravity would have done him no earthly good, without his pretty niece."

Voltaire possibly exaggerates, but it cannot be denied that the attractions of Miss Baston (later Mrs. Conduitt) had something to do with Newton's appointment, though his knowledge of chemistry was indeed something of a recommendation. Miss Baston was an exceptional lady, both wise and fair. She inspired a lively affection in the Count of Halifax, at whose home she dwelt for many years, and on his death received from him a magnificent legacy. A secret marriage has been hinted at, but was never established as a fact. After the death of Halifax she married Mr. Conduitt, and the two made their home with Newton, continuing in his household to the end of his life.

But no matter what may actually have been the occasion of his sudden good fortune, he never thought of attributing it to anything but his own merit.

His new position was by no means a sinecure. He was so desirous of devoting himself entirely to his new work that he resigned his professorship, naming Whiston as his successor.

It is possible to regret that Newton accepted a public office, for thenceforth he neglected his study of the sciences, saying that the King's business should come before his own. It would have been better for his peace of mind had he preserved his earlier independence, for a thousand petty aggravations, denunciations and law-suits, assailed him from all quarters. One Chaloner, charged with a special mission by Parliament, discovered a large amount of counterfeit money. In his recommendations for the discovery and apprehension of the culprits, Newton's name was mentioned, and in another part of the report charges were actually brought against him. The remaining section of Chaloner's document, however, contains proof of the writer's own perfidy, to which he later confessed. He was condemned to death and executed.

It is of course unnecessary to clear Newton of this charge. We happen to know, incidentally, that Newton refused £6000 from a man who tried to bribe him.

The very year Newton was made Warden of the Mint, the Academy of Sciences in Paris elected him to one of the eight associate memberships which they had just decreed.

In 1701 his Cambridge colleagues sent him for the second time to Parliament, where again he played a rôle as uneventful as before. In 1703 he was made President of the Royal Society of London, succeeding Lord Somers; for twenty-three consecutive years, until his death, he continued in this position, a fitting representative of the science and the scientists of old England.

In 1705 Queen Anne conferred upon him the title of baronet, with the necessary letters of patent.

Newton eventually had all the honors to which he might reasonably aspire: everyone acknowledged his genius, and his reputation throughout Europe was immense. "He was so highly revered," says Fontenelle, "that death itself could not add to his honors."

We have spoken at some length of the scientist; let us see what sort of man he was. Our best testimony in this respect is furnished by his contemporaries.

According to Mr. Conduitt, Newton was of medium height, and toward the end of his life inclined to stoutness. His eye was keen and piercing, his expression calm; his beautiful white hair was concealed under a wig. Such were the distinguishing marks of his person. Bishop Atterbury states, however, that during the last twenty years, Newton's eyes had become dull and tired-looking. He spoke very little in company, and his tastes were simple: he ate temperately and dressed without the slightest affectation. He had none of those habits that so often become our tyrants after they have served as our pleasures. If he was offered tobacco he refused, lest, as he said, he might create a useless habit. He lived the life of a solitary, and like all men who are occupied with profound meditations, he acted strangely. Sometimes, in getting out of bed, an idea would come to him and he would sit on the edge of the bed, half-dressed, for hours at a time. He would forget to eat unless he were reminded. One day, though he had eaten nothing and felt very hungry, he was convinced he had already dined. Here is the story.

Newton's friend Dr. Stukeley came to dine with him. After waiting a long time for him to come out of his study, the Doctor decided to help himself to some of the chicken that was already on the table. When he had finished, he left the remains of the bird on the plate and covered it with the silver cover. At the end of several hours, Newton finally made his appearance, saying that he was very hungry. He sat down to the table and lifted the cover from the chicken, but when he saw the carcass, "I thought," he cried, "I had not yet dined. I see I was mistaken!"

Newton was a timid man, which explains his habitual reserve in the company of others. We have a striking example of this in something that

occurred in the House of Commons in the year 1714. The members were discussing a bill relative to the determination of longitude at sea. Called upon to give his opinion, Newton did so in writing, but would not utter aloud one word in answer to the objections raised by many of the members. Whiston, who sat behind him, rose and said, "Mr. Newton is unwilling to state his opinion orally, but I can assure you that he favors the bill." In spite of this invitation to speak, Newton kept his silence, and the bill was passed without further discussion.

A foreigner once asked him how he had discovered the law of gravity. "By thinking about it continuously," was the reply. He described his methods in the following words: "I keep the object of my research constantly before me, waiting until the first light begins to dawn, little by little; finally this changes and at last the light is complete."

Newton's contemporaries did not speak highly of his personal character, and some of them have described it with considerable severity. Whiston, for instance, though it must be remembered that Whiston was antagonistic to his ideas. "Newton's character," said this scientist, "was the most timid, crafty, and suspicious, I have ever encountered. If he had been alive when I wrote attacking his chronology, I should not have dared publish a refutation, for — judging from my knowledge of his habits — I should have feared for my life." There is more than a note of exaggeration here. I do not believe that the English philosopher ever sought to take revenge on Whiston's ideas by attacking Whiston himself. Such things do not happen in the peaceful realm of the sciences. Yet the expressions used by Whiston in describing the character of his predecessor at Cambridge, seem to bear all the marks of truth.

Flamsteed, director of the Greenwich Observatory, whose relations with Newton were at one time very strained, gives us another quite similar description:

"Newton always seemed to me invidious, ambitious, exceedingly avid of praise, and very irritable when contradicted."

It would be hard to question the justice of this last statement. If further proof of it were necessary, we have only to refer to the arguments of Newton with Hooke, Huygens, Leibniz and other scientists.

It is likewise possible to charge Newton with a certain unfairness in the conduct of his controversies. His difference with Leibniz, in connection with the subject of Differential Calculus, furnishes additional proof.

Most of Newton's biographers, however, are agreed that in deferring the publication of his works he gave proof of his extraordinary modesty. But he doubtless waited thus long because he remembered the inconveniences and petty objections raised to his earliest communications to the Royal Society. He kept his treasures hidden in order to preserve his own peace of mind. It was not until his reputation was firmly established that he decided to make public his discoveries in book form.

"I was," he wrote later to Leibniz, "so persecuted by objections and opposed by endless obstacles because I had published my ideas, that I determined to expose myself no longer. I accuse myself of having been imprudent in thus pursuing a vain illusion, at the cost of my peace of mind, which was so solid and substantial."

Newton was profoundly religious. He would allow no one in his presence to ridicule religion in the form in which it was practised in England. When Halley, who was without such scruples, uttered certain pleasantries on the subject, Newton interrupted him, saying, "I have studied these things, and you have not."

He was likewise charitable, and thanks to his munificent salary as well as to the simplicity of his habits, he was able to do much good. "He did not believe," says Fontenelle, "that to leave property by his will was to give it at all." He therefore made no will. He habitually helped his friends and relatives. At his death, eight beneficiaries — four nephews and four nieces — shared the handsome sum of £32,000.

Conduitt, husband of that niece we have already mentioned, succeeded him as Director of the Mint, where he had already worked under Newton during the latter's declining years.

Newton never married. "Perhaps," as Fontenelle says, "he never had the leisure to think about marriage."

For long it was maintained that he had no time for love. But this is not so, as we have recently learned. Dr. Stukeley made public certain confidential statements made to him by a Mrs. Vincent who, before her marriage as Miss Story, had known Newton when he was staying with the Grantham apothecary. She boarded in the same house, together with several other young persons. It appears that the youthful scientist had conceived a passion for Miss Story. But because of his poverty and the uncertainty of his future, he could not think of marrying her. He was always pleased to see her in later life, and whenever, after he had become famous, he made a journey into Lincolnshire, he never failed to call upon her. On several occasions he rendered financial aid to various members of her family.

Up to the age of eighty, Newton enjoyed a fair degree of good health. He never had to use spectacles, and so long as he lived he never lost a tooth.

At about the age of eighty, he began to ail considerably, but his sufferings were still not unendurable. The most striking symptoms were not evident until twenty days before his death.

In his *Eloge de Newton*, Fontenelle thus tells of the scientist's last malady and death:

"'Twas thought he certainly had the stone, which could not be cured; when the pain was so violent that the drops of sweat ran from his face, he never was heard to groan, nor show any signs of impatience, but as soon as he had a moment's respite would smile, and talk with his usual

gaiety. Until this time he had constantly read or written many hours every day. He read the Journal of Saturday March 18th in the morning, and talked a good while with the celebrated Dr. Mead; he was in his perfect senses till that evening, when he quite lost them, and never recovered them more, as if the faculties of his soul were subject only to a total extinction, and could not feel a decay. He died on the Monday following, March 20th, in the eighty-fifth year of his age.

"His body was laid in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, a place from whence persons of the highest rank, and sometimes crowned heads themselves, are carried to their graves. From thence he was carried to Westminster Abbey, the pall being supported by the Lord Chancellor, the Dukes of Montrose and Roxburgh, and the Earls of Pembroke, Sussex, and Macclesfield. By these six Peers we may judge what a number of persons of distinction attended the funeral solemnity. The Bishop of Rochester read the service, and the corpse was deposited near the entrance of the choir."

It was there that Newton's family had erected to his memory a magnificent monument upon which was inscribed an epitaph commemorating his chief discoveries. Dr. Robert Smith, a student of his and author of a *Treatise on Optics*, also had a marble statue put up for him before the chapel of Trinity College at Cambridge. The pedestal bears the following inscription: *Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit.*

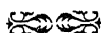
One thing deserves mention: the English government took no official part in the funeral honours rendered to Newton, and both the tomb and the statue were the result of private initiative. If certain lords of high birth joined in the funeral procession of the great man, they did so as members of the Royal Society, and not as representatives of the House of Lords. "The honors," says Arago, "which were lavished on a seaman who had captured Spanish galleys or set fire to a foreign capital, were accorded with the utmost parsimony to him whose name will outlast the greatest political and military reputations of the entire world."

It will be seen, in the course of this short review of the chief events of Newton's life that the philosopher of Cambridge is among the greatest figures that humanity has ever produced. Newton, of course, had his shortcomings and these we have in no wise sought to conceal or even to extenuate, but which of us mortals is free from them? Much should be forgiven to a genius who has in so high a degree extended the frontiers of human understanding.

BARUCH [BENEDICT] DE SPINOZA

1632-1677

By JEAN MAXIMILIEN LUCAS¹ (1636 [1646?]-1697)



ALTHOUGH our century is most enlightened, it is yet no more just to its great men than other ages, and although it owes to them its greatest benefits and profits therefrom, it cannot tolerate praise given them, either from motives of envy or from ignorance. It is astonishing that he who wishes to write their lives should have to hide himself — which he does — as though he were committing a crime. This holds especially true in the case of those great men who have achieved fame in unusual ways, not understood by small minds. Under the pretext of honouring ideas that are generally accepted, though these be absurd and ridiculous, they defend their own ignorance, sacrificing thus the clearest sort of reasoning and, as it were, the truth itself.

Yet, whatever the dangers to be met with on so difficult a path, I should be making small use of the philosophy of the great man whose life and words I am to describe, if I were too timid to attempt it. I have small fear of the people's anger, since I have the honour to live in a Republic which allows its citizens freedom of opinion, and in which it were useless to desire happiness if those whose virtue is proven were looked upon without jealousy. Should this book, dedicated to the memory of an illustrious friend, fail to meet with the approval of everyone, it will at any rate appeal to those who love only the truth, and feel a sort of loathing for the impertinent masses.

Baruch de Spinoza (or Spinosas), native of Amsterdam, the most beautiful city in Europe, was born of very humble parents: his father was a Jew and a Portuguese. Being unable to furnish him with the means of succeeding in trade, he determined to have him taught Hebrew literature. This pursuit, which is the whole of Jewish learning, could not however wholly occupy a mind as brilliant as Spinoza's. Before he reached the age of fifteen he raised problems which the most learned among the Jews could scarcely solve. Though no one so young has ever been endowed with true discernment, yet *he* had enough to perceive that his doubts em-

¹ Translated from the French *Vie de feu Monsieur de Spinoza*, especially for this collection, by Barrett H. Clark.

Written in 1677 or 1678, this biography was not published until 1719. There is some question as to authorship, though it is generally attributed to the French refugee Lucas.

barrassed the master. For fear of irritating him, he pretended that he was quite satisfied with the answers given, and merely wrote them down, saying that he would make use of them at the proper time and in the proper circumstances. Since he read nothing but the Bible, he was soon able to dispense with any interpreter. His ideas on the subject were so intelligent that the Rabbis could answer him only like ignorant fools who, seeing that their reasoning powers are exhausted, accuse those who hold them to too strict account, with having ideas that are far from those proper to religion.

Spinoza perceived that such a strange method of procedure was of no use in the pursuit of truth. "The common people know not the truth," he said. "To believe, without questioning, even the most authoritative books, is to show too great a fondness for the errors of old."

He therefore determined to seek guidance only within himself, though he would spare no effort to discover the truth. To conceive, before the age of twenty, a plan of such importance, a strong heart and extraordinary strength were required. And indeed he soon showed that he had made no foolish or hasty decision, for when he began to read the scripture anew, he laid bare its obscurity, explained its mysteries, and brought the light of day through the clouds, behind which he had been told that the truth was hidden.

After studying the Bible, he read and reread The Talmud with the same scrupulous care, and since there was none who equalled him in his knowledge of Hebrew, he found nothing difficult there, but at the same time nothing that satisfied him. Yet so good was his judgment that he forebore to make any conclusions with his ideas before he approved them.

Yet Morteira, a famous man among the Jews, the least ignorant of all the Rabbis of his day, admired the behaviour and the genius of his pupil, and was unable to understand how a young man with such keenness of mind could be so modest. That he might understand him perfectly, he put him to every sort of test, and subsequently admitted that he could discover nothing amiss in his behaviour nor anything wanting in the beauty of his intellect. The approbation of Morteira increased the good reputation of his pupil, though it added no particle of vanity to the young man himself. In spite of his youth, he showed a precocious sort of prudence in holding of small account the friendship and praise of men.

The love of truth was so far the dominant passion in him, that he saw hardly anyone. Yet in spite of his efforts to avoid others' company, there are certain encounters one cannot honourably escape, even though they may occasionally prove harmful.

Of those most desirous of knowing him were two young men who declared themselves his particular friends. These begged him to tell them his real thoughts, saying that no matter what they might be, he need fear nothing from them: their curiosity in the matter arose only from a

wish to settle their own uncertainties. The young disciple was much surprised by so unusual a proposal, and for some time made no reply. But when they pressed him, he said to them, as he laughed, that "they had Moses and the Prophets, true Israelites, who had already laid down the laws for everything. They ought therefore to follow these, without a scruple, if they too were Israelites." — "But if we put our faith in them," answered one of the youths, "I cannot see that there are immaterial Beings; that God has no body, that the Soul is not immortal, and that the angels are not corporeal. What," he continued to the disciple, "do you think of this? Has God a body? Are there such beings as angels? Is the soul immortal?" — "I admit," said the disciple, "that, since I had found nothing in the Bible about the immaterial and incorporeal, there is no reason why we should not believe that God has a created body; especially since, in the words of the Prophet, God being great, it is impossible to conceive greatness without extent in space — consequently, that he should not be a body. Regarding the spirits, surely the Scripture does not state that they are real and permanent substances, but merely phantoms called angels, because God employs them to make known his wishes. Thus the angels and every other kind of Spirit, are not visible simply because their substance is so delicate and diaphanous that they can be seen only as one sees phantoms in a mirror, in a dream, or at night, just as Jacob, when sleeping, saw the angels mounting and descending a ladder. It is for this reason that there is no record of the Jews having excommunicated the Sadducees for not believing in angels, since the Old Testament makes no mention of their having been created. As for the soul, this word, where it is referred to in scripture, is used simply to express life — everything that lives. It is useless to seek anything there upon which to base a conception of immortality.

"Regarding the notion that there is much against the conception, this is evident in hundreds of places: there is nothing more easily proven, but this is neither the time nor the place to talk about it" — "What little you say of it," answered one of the two friends, "should convince the most sceptical, but it is not enough to satisfy your friends, who need something more substantial. This is all too important to be merely touched upon. If we leave you for the present, it is only with the understanding that you will take up the subject again."

The disciple, who wished only to cut short the discussion, promised them whatever they desired, but on subsequent occasions he avoided every effort on their part to renew it. Calling to mind that man's inquisitiveness is rarely motivated by good intentions, he began to observe the conduct of his friends, in which he found so much that was blameworthy that he broke with them, and would speak with them no more.

Perceiving his intentions, these friends simply muttered to themselves for awhile in the belief that they were being put to a test by Spinoza;

but when they realized that there was no hope of being able to persuade him, they decided to take vengeance, and in order to make it the more painful, they began to set people's minds against him, declaring that they deceived themselves in believing that this young man might become one of the pillars of the Synagogue; that, to all appearances, he would be rather its destroyer, since he had only hatred and contempt for the law of Moses. They said they had sought his company at the suggestion of Morte[i]ra; but realized that he was an impious fellow, and that the Rabbi was deceived in having a good opinion of him. His very presence inspired them with horror.

This false report, secretly circulated, soon became common property, and when the two young men believed that the auspicious moment had come, they reported to the judges of the Synagogue, and so aroused them that they even considered condemning Spinoza without having heard his defence. After the first flames of their ardor had subsided (even the holy ministers of the Temple were not free from the passion of anger), the authorities commanded Spinoza to appear before them. Since he was secure in his conscience, he went with a carefree heart to the Synagogue, where his judges, with downcast countenances and full of ardent zeal on behalf of the House of God, declared that after such high hopes had been entertained of his piety, they found it hard to believe the evil reports that circulated about him; they had with bitter hearts now summoned him in order to find out from him the truth of the matter, and commanded him to state clearly his beliefs. He now stood charged with the most dreadful of crimes: contempt of the Law. They ardently hoped he could clear himself of the charge, but said that if he were judged guilty, there was no torture severe enough to punish him.

Then they urged him to say whether or not he was guilty, and when they perceived that he denied his guilt, his false friends brazenly testified to having heard him make light of the Jews as superstitious people, born and bred in ignorance, who knew not what God was, and had the effrontery to call themselves His people, thus eliciting the contempt of the other nations; that as regards the Law, it had been instituted by a man who was indeed a far better politician than they, though no more enlightened in physical science, or even in theology. With one iota of commonsense anyone could reveal the imposture, and one must needs be as stupid as the Hebrews of the time of Moses to put faith in this fine fellow.

This last, added by these scoundrels to what Spinoza said about God, the Angels and the soul, so affected the minds of those present, that they cried out Anathema upon him, even before the accused had time to defend himself.

Driven onward by a holy zeal to avenge their Law, that had (as they thought) been outraged, the judges questioned, insisted, and intimidated. To all this the accused made answer that their grimaces aroused his pity,

and that he would admit what was stated by such worthy witnesses if it was unnecessary to prove it by incontestable reasons.

Morteira, being informed of the danger that threatened his pupil, hastened to the Synagogue, and after taking his place next to the judge, he asked Spinoza whether he remembered the good example he had given him. Was this present revolt the reward of the care he had taken with the young man's education? Did he not fear to fall into the hands of the living God? The scandal made by him was already great, yet there was still time for repentance.

Without the least emotion his pupil answered him saying that he realized the gravity of these threats, and that in return for the trouble Morteira had taken in teaching him the Hebrew language, he [Spinoza] would now be glad to teach his instructor how to excommunicate.

On hearing these words the irate Rabbi spat forth all his venom against the youth; after administering a few formal reproaches, he declared the assembly closed, left the Synagogue swearing not to return there again unless he bore the anathema with him. Yet, despite this, he did not think his pupil would have the courage to await the threatened punishment. In this he was mistaken, for later events proved that while he recognized the beauty of the pupil's mind, he did not realize the strength of his determination. The time having passed in which they tried to show Spinoza the abyss into which he was about to cast himself, a day was decided upon for the excommunication. The moment he was apprised of this, he made preparations for retiring and far from feeling any terror, "Good!" he said to the person who brought the news. "They are forcing me to do nothing that I would not have done of my own free will had I not feared the scandal. Since, however, they wish it to be this way, I joyfully take the road which lies open to me, with this consolation, that my departure will be freer from sin than was that of the early Hebrews when they fled from Egypt. Though my means of existence are no better than theirs, I take with me nothing that belongs to anyone, and I can console myself with the thought that no matter what injustice is done me, no one has anything to reproach me with."

He had for some time associated so little with the Jews that he was obliged to consort with Christians. He made friendships among the well educated Christians, who told him it was unfortunate that he knew neither Latin nor Greek. Though he was familiar with Hebrew, Italian and Spanish, to say nothing of German, Flemish, and Portuguese, which were his own languages, he fully realized the importance of discovering some way of acting on the advice given him, for he had been born poor, and had no friends influential enough to help him.

This idea was with him constantly, and he spoke of it whenever he was with others, and finally Van den Hebden [Enden], who was a successful teacher of Greek and Latin, offered himself as instructor, and the cour-

tesy of his house, demanding no recompense save occasionally that he help him with his pupils, when he should become sufficiently expert.

Morteira, meantime, irritated at the contempt shown to him and his Law by his former pupil, changed his friendship to hatred, and in casting his sentence of anathema against him, enjoyed the pleasure which all petty souls taste in taking vengeance.

The Jewish ceremony of excommunication is not radically different from others, yet, in order not to omit anything that may instruct the reader, I shall here touch upon the chief details. The people being assembled in the Synagogue, the ceremony (called *Herim*) begins with the lighting of many black candles and the opening of the tabernacle in which are kept the Tablets. Afterwards the Cantor, who is stationed in an elevated position, chants in a doleful tone the words of execration, while another cantor blows a horn and the candles are inverted so that the wax falls, drop by drop, into a receptacle filled with blood. The congregation, filled with holy horror at the sight of this spectacle, calls out "Amen" as a response, furiously, in the belief that could they rend the excommunicated person in pieces they would be doing something pleasant in the sight of God. And they would indeed do this, if they were to meet him at such a time, or as he was leaving the Synagogue. It should be noted here that the blowing of the horn, the inverting of candles and the receptacle of blood are ceremonies that are observed only in connection with cases of blasphemy. When blasphemy is not charged, there is only the sentence of excommunication, as in the case of Spinoza, who was not accused of blasphemy, but only of having failed to show respect for Moses and the Law.

Excommunication is so serious a matter among the Jews that the best friends of one who has suffered it dare not render him the least service, nor even speak with him, for fear of suffering the same punishment. Hence, they who fear the pleasure of solitude and the impertinence of the masses, prefer to suffer any other penalty than that of excommunication.

Finding a refuge where he considered himself safe against the insults of the Jews, Spinoza devoted his energies to improving himself in all branches of human knowledge; with genius such as he had, he made great progress in a remarkably short time.

Meanwhile the Jews were disappointed to see that their action had no effect upon the young man and that he whom they sought to ruin had escaped from their power. They therefore accused him of a crime of which they had not been able to convict him. I refer here to the Jews in general, for I would not risk saying that Morteira and his colleagues were his worst enemies, though in truth those who make their living by the altar never forgive. The two crimes which in their estimation were unforgivable were first Spinoza's withdrawing himself from their jurisdiction, and second, managing to exist without their help. Morteira in particular

could not endure the idea that he and his [former] pupil should remain in the same city, after the insult he believed himself to have suffered. Yet how was he to go about driving him away? He was not the chief magistrate of the city, as he was head of the Synagogue. Still, with malice in the form of pretended zeal, the old man succeeded in his wishes. This is the way he did it. Accompanied by a Rabbi who thought as he did in the matter, he called upon the magistrates, and informed them that he had excommunicated Spinoza for no ordinary reasons, but because the young man had blasphemed most execrably against Moses and against God. He magnified this lie by every device that a holy father could suggest to a pitiless spirit, and concluded by asking that the culprit be expelled from Amsterdam. Judging from the behaviour of the Rabbi, and seeing how eloquently he inveighed against his former pupil, it was easy to perceive that a secret rage rather than pious zeal was inciting him to an act of vengeance. Therefore when the judges perceived this they sought to avoid considering the complaints, and sent the Rabbis to the clergymen who, after investigating the charges, were seriously embarrassed. Judging from the manner in which the accused defended himself, they found no evidence of impiety. On the other hand, the man making the charge was a Rabbi, and his rank reminded them of their own. All things considered, they could not very well absolve a man whom those of equal rank seemed bent upon ruining, without bringing the office of clergyman into disrepute. This reason—good or bad as it may appear—made them give their decision in favour of the Rabbi. In consequence, the magistrates sentenced the accused to an exile of some months: they dared not oppose the clergy, for reasons which can easily be surmised.

Thus was the rabbinical faction avenged, yet it is a fact that the intention of the judges was not so much this as their desire to avoid the importunate clamour of the most vexatiously persistent of men. As a matter of fact, the decree was far from harming Spinoza, since it accorded with his desire to quit Amsterdam.

After he had learned as much of the human sciences as a philosopher should know, he considered how he might get free of the crowds of the great city, which were causing him some annoyance. Thus he was driven forth not by persecution, but rather by his love of solitude, where he had no doubt he should discover the truth of things. This ruling passion, which gave him little respite, drew him forth with joy in his heart from his native city to a village called Rynburg where, far from all the obstacles he could overcome only through flight, he gave himself up entirely to philosophy. There were few authors who satisfied him, so that he had recourse [largely] to his own meditations, and was resolved to see how far they might extend. In this he has so well revealed the grandeur of his mind, that there are surely few persons indeed who have made such progress in the subjects which he treated.

He remained in this retirement two years, but though he took the greatest precautions to avoid all intercourse with his friends, those most intimate with him sought him out occasionally, and tore themselves away with the utmost difficulty.

Most of his friends were Cartesians, and they used to formulate problems for him which they declared could be worked out only according to the principles of their Master [i.e., Descartes]. Spinoza showed them the error under which the scholars of that day laboured, proving his contention by arguments entirely different from those [they had been accustomed to use]. I wonder at the power of the man's mind and the force of his prejudices. These friends of his, on returning home, barely escaped being overwhelmed when they spread it abroad that Descartes was not the only philosopher who deserved to be followed. Most of the clergy, impregnated by the philosophy of that great man, and jealous of the right they believed they enjoyed of being infallible in their choice [of a philosophy], protested against this new report which offended them, and neglected no means known to them of stopping it at the source. Yet, in spite of all they did, the evil spread and almost precipitated civil war in the realm of literature. This was only prevented when it was decided to ask our philosopher to explain in public his ideas on Descartes. Spinoza, who desired only tranquillity, devoted some hours however to this labor, and printed it in 1664. He established there, in geometrical fashion, the two first parts of the Descartes principles; these are described in the preface, which was written by a friend of his. But no matter what he was able to say of this famous writer, the adherents of the great man, who were accused of being atheists, have since then done their utmost to precipitate the storm upon the head of our philosopher.

This persecution, which lasted as long as he lived, far from doing him harm, served only to strengthen him in his pursuit of truth.

He attributed most of the evil done by mankind to their imperfect understanding; and for fear that he himself might err, he retreated still further from society into solitude, left the village where he was staying and went to Voorburg, where he thought he would find more quiet than before. But the true scholars who sought and found him again after he had disappeared, pestered him by their visits in Voorburg as they did before in the other village. Never was Spinoza altogether insensible of the real affection shown him by sincere men, so that he finally gave in to their exhortations that he should quit the country and go to some city, where they might see him with less difficulty. He therefore moved to The Hague, which he preferred to Amsterdam because of the purer air, and there he resided continuously to the end of his life.

In the beginning he was visited by only a small number of friends, who were considerate in the demands they made upon him. But since the friendly spot where he lived was never without travellers in quest of all

that deserves to be seen, the more enlightened among them — and of all ranks — would have thought their journey wasted if they had failed to pay him a visit. Also, seeing he was himself as great as his reputation, there were no scholars who failed to write him for enlightenment on the subject of their uncertainties. This is proved by the great quantity of letters which form part of the book [of them] that was printed after his death. Yet despite the visits made to him, the many letters he had to write in reply to the scholars who wrote to him from every part [of Europe], and the writing of those marvelous works which are today our delight, were not enough to occupy the attention of this great genius. Each day he devoted some hours to the preparation of lenses for microscopes and telescopes, a pursuit in which he excelled; and had not death cut short his career, it is safe to assume that he would have discovered the deepest secrets of the science of optics.

He was so passionate a seeker after truth that though his health was exceedingly delicate and he needed rest, he took so little of it that on one occasion he never left his room during a period of three full months. His love of truth was so great that he refused a professorship at Heidelberg, for fear of its interfering with his purpose.

Since he was at such great pains to train his intelligence, it is not to be wondered at that everything he published is stamped with his inimitable character. Before he came, the Holy Scripture was an inaccessible sanctuary, and all those who spoke of it were like blind persons. He alone spoke with the authority of a scholar, in his *Treatise On Theology and Politics*. It is certain that before him no man had ever been so completely familiar with the ancient lore of the Hebrews.

Though there be no wound more dangerous than what is inflicted by slander, or more difficult to bear, no one ever heard Spinoza express resentment against those who attacked him. Many have sought to defame this book [The *Treatise*] with hard and bitter insults, but instead of turning their own weapons against them, Spinoza merely clarified the passages to which his detractors had given a false meaning, for fear that their malice might confuse honest souls. If this book occasioned a great deal of persecution, it was not the first time that the thoughts of great men have been wrongly interpreted. A great reputation entails more dangers than a small one.

He had so little desire for material fortune that after the death of M. de Witt, who left him a pension yielding two hundred francs a year, when he showed the written bequest of his Mæcenas to the heirs and they raised some difficulty in the matter of continuing payments, he returned the document to them with as little concern as though he had a fortune elsewhere. This unconcerned manner of his caused them to reconsider, and they eagerly granted to him what they had just refused. This pension constituted the chief part of his income, for he had inherited from his

father nothing but involved business affairs — with the Jews the good man had been dealing with. These latter, believing that the son had little desire to straighten out their dishonest practices, so confused him that he preferred to leave everything in their hands rather than sacrifice his peace of mind to uncertain expectations.

He was so anxious to avoid doing anything to attract the attention and admiration of the world, that when he was on the point of death he stipulated that his name should not be printed on his *Ethics*. Affectations of this kind, he declared, were unworthy of a philosopher. Yet his fame had so spread abroad that he was a topic of conversation in high places. M. le Prince de Condé, when he was in Utrecht at the beginning of the war of 1672, sent him a safe-conduct, with a most condescending letter in which he invited the philosopher to come to see him. Spinoza was too well-bred and intelligent not to understand what he owed to one of so exalted a rank as the Prince, or to ignore in this instance what was due His Highness, yet a trip that would require some weeks caused him to hesitate, since he never left his retreat except for a very short time. Finally, after some delays, his friends persuaded him to set forth. Meantime the King had ordered the Prince elsewhere, but in his absence M. de Luxembourg received him most graciously, and gave him every assurance of His Highness' esteem. The great crowd of courtiers in no wise astonished our philosopher: his polite manner resembled more closely that of the court than that known in the commercial city where he was born; one could safely say it was free of all faults. Though the mode of life at court was opposed to all his teaching and predilection, he submitted to it with as good a grace as the courtiers themselves.

M. le Prince was most anxious to see him, and was continually requesting him to wait. Those who were curious about him and always found certain new reasons for liking him, were delighted that His Highness forced him to remain. But after several weeks M. le Prince sent word that he was unable to return to Utrecht, and all the French who were interested in Spinoza were sorry when our philosopher took his leave, in spite of the friendly offers made him by M. de Luxembourg.

There was one quality in him which I esteem above all others, for it is rare in philosophers. He was extremely neat in his appearance, and never left his house without wearing clothes that distinguished the gentleman from the pedant.

"It is not," he would say, "the untidy and careless appearance that makes us wise men; on the contrary, an affected negligence is the mark of a mean spirit without true wisdom, in which knowledge can give birth only to impurity and corruption."

Riches were no temptation to him, nor on the other hand did he fear the results of poverty. His virtue raised him above all such considerations, and though he was never favoured by Fortune, he never made advances to

her, nor complained of her. If his material needs were inconsiderable, his mind was great and rich in that which makes the greatest men. Even when he was in the utmost need, he was generous, lending the little that he had to his friends in the most liberal fashion, as though he were enjoying the greatest affluence. Once, on learning that a certain man who owed him two hundred francs had gone into bankruptcy, he smiled and said, "I must reduce my manner of living a little, in order to make up this small loss. Such is the price we pay for fortitude." I do not tell this incident as anything extraordinary, but since nothing serves so well as little things of this kind to illustrate genius, I felt I ought not to omit it.

His health was never very good at any time during his lifetime, so that he had learned to bear suffering from his earliest years. No man ever knew how to suffer so patiently as he. He sought consolation only in himself, and the only suffering that affected him was that of others. "To believe misfortune less severe when it is shared by many," he remarked, "is proof of ignorance; it is a stupid thing to esteem suffering that is borne by many persons at once, among the number of our consolations." It was in such a frame of mind that he shed tears when he witnessed his fellow-citizens tearing to pieces the father of them all [De Witt], and though he better than anyone else knew the excesses of which men were capable, he could not restrain himself from shuddering at the cruel sight. On the one hand, he had seen perpetrated an unexampled parricide, and the worst ingratitude; on the other he was deprived of an illustrious Mæcenas, of the only support that remained to him. This was sufficient to overcome an ordinary person, but in the case of a man like Spinoza, used to triumphing over the troubles of the soul, it could not do so. Self-possessed, as always, he soon mastered the feelings aroused by this terrible event. One of his inseparable friends was astonished thereat, but our philosopher replied to him: "Of what use is our wisdom to us if after succumbing to the passions of the masses we are unable to rise above ourselves?"

He belonged to no political faction, and favoured none, according to each a right to its own prejudices, though he maintained that most of them were an obstacle in the way of truth. He further declared that reason was useless if one failed to put it into operation, or were forbidden to do so in cases where a choice was demanded. "The two greatest and commonest faults of man are laziness and presumption. Some are content to lie lazily in complete ignorance, that sets them below the rank of beasts, while others make themselves tyrants ruling over the minds of the simple, giving them a world of false notions for the eternal verities. This is the source of the absurd beliefs that have infatuated mankind, that divide them among themselves, that are diametrically opposed to the ultimate intention of nature, which is rather to render them akin to one another, like children of the same mother. Hence it is only those who have cast off the teachings of their youth who can know the truth. It is necessary to

make the most exceptional attempts to overcome the impressions of habit and destroy the false ideas that fill the minds of us men, before we are able to judge of things themselves." To escape from this abyss was, in his opinion, as great a miracle as to clarify chaos.

Small wonder, then, that during his entire life-time he waged incessant warfare upon superstition. Besides the fact that he was carried on by natural inclination, the early training given him by his father (a man of good sense) was also a contributing factor. That good man had taught him to distinguish between superstition and true piety. Desiring to test the lad, who was not yet ten years old at the time, he commissioned him to collect a certain sum of money that was owing him from an old lady in Amsterdam. When the lad came to her house, he found her reading the Bible, and she motioned him to wait until she had ended her devotions. When she had done so, the child informed her of his errand, and when the good lady had counted out the money for him, "Here," she said, pointing to where it lay on the table, "is what I owe your father. May you grow up to be as honest as he is; he has never failed to follow the Law of Moses. Heaven will bless you only in so far as you follow in his steps." After she had spoken, she began to put the money into the boy's bag, but the boy, realizing that she showed unmistakable signs of that real hypocrisy and false piety which his father had warned him of, insisted on counting the money, in spite of all she was able to do to prevent it. Finding that two ducats which the pious widow had slipped into the drawer of a table (which she had made for this express purpose) were missing, he thus proved the accuracy of his suspicion. He was very proud of his success in this affair, for which his father praised him. He set himself to studying persons like the old lady with even greater care than before, and made such delicate mockery of them that everyone who heard him was astonished.

In all that he did, virtue was his aim, but he did not conceive her as a frightful being, after the custom of the ancients, for he was not opposed to innocent pleasures. True, the pleasures of the mind were his principal pursuit, while those of the body concerned him very little. At such times as he indulged in those diversions one cannot decently eschew, he regarded them as things of little importance, which did not ruffle the tranquillity of the spirit. It was this last that he prized above all else.

What I esteem in him most of all is that being born and bred among a grossly material people much given to superstition, he had not been touched by bitterness, but had cleansed his mind of those false notions with which so many have been imbued.

He had completely outgrown the stupid and ridiculous notions of the Jews on the subject of God. He who understood the ultimate purpose of true philosophy, who was universally conceded by the best minds of our century most effectively to have practised it, such a man, I say, would scarcely have the same ideas about God as are held by the masses.

But simply because he did not believe in Moses or the Prophets — since, as he said, these were in harmony with the grossness of the people — is that sufficient reason to condemn him? I have read most of the philosophers, and I assure you in all honesty that few of their works give us ideas on the Deity more beautiful than are found in the writings of Spinoza.

He declared that the more we know of God, the better can we control our passions; that in knowing God we find perfect mental peace, the true love of God that brings salvation, which is blessedness and freedom.

These, then, are the chief points which, according to our philosopher's teaching, are dictated by reason in reference to a good life and the universal good of man. Compare them with the dogmas of the New Testament, and you will observe that the two systems are identical. The Law of Jesus Christ leads us to the love of God and our neighbour — which is, in Spinoza's opinion, precisely what reason dictates. Hence it is easy to infer why St. Paul called Christianity a reasonable religion: it is founded upon reason, and reason directs it. According to Origen, a reasonable religion is that which is submitted to the rules of reason. Indeed, one of the early Fathers tells us that we should live and act according to the rules of reason.

These are the opinions worked out by our philosopher, supported by the Fathers and by Scripture, and yet he was condemned, but apparently by those whose motives urged them to argue against reason or those who knew how to use it. I make this little digression for the purpose of encouraging the simple-minded to throw off the yoke imposed on them by envious and false scholars who, unable to countenance the good reputation of good men, accuse them of holding opinions not in conformity with the truth.

But to return to Spinoza. There was in his conversation so charming a manner, his comparisons were so apt, that he brought everyone, unconsciously, to think as he did. He was persuasive without speaking either politely or elegantly. He expressed himself so clearly, and his speech was so full of good sense, that there were none among his listeners who failed to be convinced.

Such brilliant gifts attracted to him all reasonable persons, yet upon all occasions his disposition was temperate and agreeable. Of all who were in the habit of associating with him there was not one who failed to behave in friendly fashion toward him. Yet, since nothing is so well concealed as the heart of man, it was later revealed that the friendliness of most of these persons was feigned, and those who were most beholden to him treated him — for no real or apparent motive — with the lowest imaginable ingratitude. These false friends who ostensibly loved him, tore him to shreds behind his back, either in order to please those powerful ones who dislike brilliant men, or to acquire a reputation by attacking him. When one

day he learned that one of his greatest [supposed] admirers was seeking to arouse the people and the magistrate against him, he said without the least emotion: "This is not the first time that truth costs much, but slander cannot force me to abandon her."

I should like to know if there is anywhere a finer example of firmness, or a purer form of virtue? Did ever one of his enemies show such moderation?

It is clear to me that his misfortune was in having been too good and too intelligent. He revealed to the world what others wished to keep secret; he found the Key of the Sanctuary, wherein people had before seen only meaningless mysteries. This is why, in spite of his goodness, he could not live in security.

Though our philosopher was not one of those severe persons who regard marriage as an obstacle to the development of the mind, he himself never married, either because he feared the bad temper of a wife, or because the love of philosophy left no room for any other kind of love.

His constitution, never very strong, was enfeebled by constant work. There is nothing that wears one out so much as lack of sleep, and Spinoza was almost continually deprived of rest as the result of a little fever that slowly consumed him, because of his ardent meditations. He suffered much during the last years of his life, and died midway in the course of it.

He thus lived some forty-five years, since he was born in 1632, and died the twentieth [actually the 22nd] of February, 1677.

For those who wish to know something of his appearance and behaviour, he was of medium height rather than tall, and of an agreeable manner, which attracted others without their being conscious of it.

His mind was lofty and penetrating, and he had a most agreeable personality. His irony was so delicately tempered that the most severe and discriminating persons found a special charm in it.

Though he did not live long, it may well be said that he lived intensively, since he had acquired those true benefits that belong to virtue: nothing was left for him after acquiring the great reputation he won because of profound knowledge. Sobriety, patience, and vivacity [veracity] were not the least of his virtues. He may be accounted happy to have died at the very height of his glory, without one blot upon it, leaving to the wise men of the world the regret of being deprived of a light no less useful to them than the light of the sun. Although he did not have the happiness to see the end of the late wars, and the States [General] take over the government of their empire which had been half lost (either by fortune of arms or an unwise decision), it was no small benefit to have escaped the tempest his enemies were preparing for him.

These persons made him hateful in the eyes of the people because he gave them the means of distinguishing between hypocrisy and true piety, and of stamping out superstition.

Our philosopher was hence most fortunate not only in the glory of his life but in the circumstances of his death, which he looked upon with an intrepid eye, as we have learned from those who were present. It seemed that he was ever glad to offer himself as a sacrifice in order that they might not be remembered as guilty of parricide. We who are left behind deserve pity, all of us who have seen the light by a study of his writings, to whom his presence was a great guide along the pathway to truth.

Since he could not escape the lot of all that has life, let us endeavour to follow in his steps, or at least to preserve his memory by our admiration and praise, if we cannot imitate him. I give this counsel to all brave spirits: so to follow his teachings and his example that these may serve forever as a guide to all their actions.

What we love and venerate in great men is always living, and will live throughout all the ages to come. Most of those who have lived in obscurity and without glory will remain in darkness and oblivion. But Baruch de Spinoza will live in the memory of all true wise men, and in their writings, which are the temple of immortality.

Eighteenth Century Europe

ALEXANDER POPE

1688-1744

By SAMUEL JOHNSON¹ (1709-1784)



ALEXANDER POPE was born in London, May 22, 1688, of parents whose rank or station was never ascertained: we are informed that they were of "gentle blood"; that his father was of a family of which the Earl of Downe was the head; and that his mother was the daughter of William Turner, Esquire, of York, who had likewise three sons, one of whom had the honour of being killed, and the other of dying, in the service of Charles the First; the third was made a general officer in Spain, from whom the sister inherited what sequestrations and forfeitures had left in the family. This, and this only, is told by Pope; who is more willing, as I have heard observed, to show what his father was not, than what he was. It is allowed that he grew rich by trade; but whether in a shop or on the Exchange was never discovered, till Mr. Tyers told, on the authority of Mrs. Racket, that he was a linen-draper in the Strand. Both parents were papists.

Pope was from his birth of a constitution tender and delicate; but is said to have shown remarkable gentleness and sweetness of disposition. The weakness of his body continued through his life, but the mildness of his mind perhaps ended with his childhood. His voice when he was young was so pleasing, that he was called in fondness "the little Nightingale."

Being not sent early to school, he was taught to read by an aunt; and when he was seven or eight years old, became a lover of books. He first learned to write by imitating printed books; a species of penmanship in which he retained great excellence through his whole life, though his ordinary hand was not elegant. When he was about eight, he was placed in Hampshire, under Taverner, a Romish priest, who, by a method very

¹ Reprinted from *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, first published in book form, London, 1781. Originally written — 1777-81 — as prefaces to the works of the poets.

Lengthy quotations from Pope omitted — see footnote — as well as a concluding section devoted to critical analysis of some of his writings.

rarely practised, taught him the Greek and Latin rudiments together. He was now first regularly initiated in poetry by the perusal of "Ogilby's Homer," and "Sandys' Ovid." Ogilby's assistance he never repaid with any praise; but of Sandys he declared, in his notes to the "Iliad," that English poetry owed much of its beauty to his translations. Sandys very rarely attempted original composition.

From the care of Taverner, under whom his proficiency was considerable, he was removed to a school at Twyford, near Winchester, and again to another school about Hyde-park Corner; from which he used sometimes to stroll to the play-house; and was so delighted with theatrical exhibitions, that he formed a kind of play from "Ogilby's Iliad," with some verses of his own intermixed, which he persuaded his schoolfellows to act, with the addition of his master's gardener, who personated Ajax.

At the last two schools he used to represent himself as having lost part of what Taverner had taught him; and on his master at Twyford he had already exercised his poetry in a lampoon. Yet under those masters he translated more than a fourth part of the "Metamorphoses." If he kept the same proportion in his other exercises, it cannot be thought that his loss was great. He tells of himself, in his poems, that "he lisped in numbers"; and used to say, that he could not remember the time when he began to make verses. In the style of fiction it might have been said of him as of Pindar, that when he lay in his cradle, "the bees swarmed about his mouth."

About the time of the Revolution, his father, who was undoubtedly disappointed by the sudden blast of Popish prosperity, quitted his trade, and retired to Binfield in Windsor Forest, with about twenty thousand pounds; for which, being conscientiously determined not to entrust it to the government, he found no better use than that of locking it up in a chest, and taking from it what his expenses required; and his life was long enough to consume a great part of it, before his son came to the inheritance.

To Binfield Pope was called by his father when he was about twelve years old; and there he had, for a few months, the assistance of one Deane, another priest, of whom he learned only to construe a little of "Tully's Offices." How Mr. Deane could spend with a boy, who had translated so much of "Ovid," some months over a small part of "Tully's Offices," it is now vain to enquire. Of a youth so successfully employed, and so conspicuously improved, a minute account must be naturally desired; but curiosity must be contented with confused, imperfect, and sometimes improbable intelligence. Pope, finding little advantage from external help, resolved thenceforward to direct himself, and at twelve formed a plan of study, which he completed with little other incitement than the desire for excellence. His primary and principal purpose was to be a poet, with which his father accidentally concurred, by proposing subjects, and

obliging him to correct his performances by many revisals; after which the old gentleman, when he was satisfied, would say, "these are good rhymes." In his perusal of the English poets he soon distinguished the versification of Dryden, which he considered as the model to be studied, and was impressed with such veneration for his instructor, that he persuaded some friends to take him to the coffee-house which Dryden frequented, and pleased himself with having seen him.

Dryden died May 1, 1701, some days before Pope was twelve; so early must he therefore have felt the power of harmony, and the zeal of genius. Who does not wish that Dryden could have known the value of the homage that was paid him, and foreseen the greatness of his young admirer?

The earliest of Pope's productions is his "Ode on Solitude," written before he was twelve, in which there is nothing more than other forward boys have attained, and which is not equal to Cowley's performance at the same age. His time was now wholly spent in reading and writing. As he read the classics, he amused himself with translating them; and at fourteen made a version of the first book of the "Thebais," which, with some revision, he afterwards published. He must have been at this time, if he had no help, a considerable proficient in the Latin tongue.

By Dryden's fables, which had then been not long published, and were much in the hands of poetical readers, he was tempted to try his own skill in giving Chaucer a more fashionable appearance, and put "January and May," and the "Prologue of the Wife of Bath," into modern English. He translated likewise the Epistle of "Sappho to Phaon," from Ovid, to complete the version, which was before imperfect; and wrote some other small pieces, which he afterwards printed. He sometimes imitated the English poets, and professed to have written at fourteen his poem upon "Silence," after Rochester's "Nothing." He had now formed his versification, and the smoothness of his numbers surpassed his original: but this is a small part of his praise; he discovers such acquaintance both with human life and public affairs, as is not easily conceived to have been attainable by a boy of fourteen in Windsor Forest.

Next year he was desirous of opening to himself new sources of knowledge, by making himself acquainted with modern languages; and removed for a time to London, that he might study French and Italian, which as he desired nothing more than to read them, were by diligent application soon despatched. Of Italian learning he does not appear to have ever made much use in his subsequent studies. He then returned to Binfield, and delighted himself with his own poetry. He tried all styles, and many subjects. He wrote a comedy, a tragedy, an epic poem, with panegyrics on all the princes of Europe; and, as he confesses, "thought himself the greatest genius that ever was." Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings. He, indeed, who forms his opinion of

himself in solitude, without knowing the powers of other men, is very liable to error: but it was the felicity of Pope to rate himself at his real value. Most of his puerile productions were, by his maturer judgment, afterwards destroyed; "Alcander," the epic poem, was burned by the persuasion of Atterbury. The tragedy was founded on the legend of St. Genevieve. Of the comedy there is no account. Concerning his studies it is related, that he translated "Tully on Old Age"; and that, besides his books of poetry and criticisms, he read "Temple's Essays," and "Locke on Human Understanding." His reading, though his favourite authors are not known, appears to have been sufficiently extensive and multifarious; for his early pieces show, with sufficient evidence, his knowledge of books. He that is pleased with himself easily imagines that he shall please others. Sir William Trumbull, who had been Ambassador at Constantinople, and secretary of state, when he retired from business, fixed his residence in the neighbourhood of Binfield. Pope, not yet sixteen, was introduced to the statesman of sixty, and so distinguished himself, that their interviews ended in friendship and correspondence. Pope was, through his whole life, ambitious of splendid acquaintance; and he seems to have wanted neither diligence nor success in attracting the notice of the great; for, from his first entrance into the world, and his entrance was very early, he was admitted to familiarity with those whose rank or station made them most conspicuous.

From the age of sixteen, the life of Pope, as an author, may be properly computed. He now wrote his pastorals, which were shown to the poets and critics of that time; as they well deserved, they were read with admiration, and many praises were bestowed upon them and upon the Preface, which is both elegant and learned in a high degree: they were, however, not published till five years afterwards.

Cowley, Milton, and Pope, are distinguished among the English poets by the early exertion of their powers; but the works of Cowley alone were published in his childhood, and therefore of him only can it be certain that his puerile performances received no improvement from his maturer studies.

At this time began his acquaintance with Wycherley, a man who seems to have had among his contemporaries his full share of reputation, to have been esteemed without virtue, and caressed without good humour. Pope was proud of his notice; Wycherley wrote verses in his praise, which he was charged by Dennis with writing to himself, and they agreed for a while to flatter one another. It is pleasant to remark how soon Pope learned the cant of an author, and began to treat critics with contempt, though he had yet suffered nothing from them. But the fondness of Wycherley was too violent to last. His esteem of Pope was such, that he submitted some poems to his revision; and when Pope, perhaps proud of such confidence, was sufficiently bold in his criticisms, and liberal in his altera-

tions, the old scribbler was angry to see his pages defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendment of his faults. They parted; but Pope always considered him with kindness, and visited him a little time before he died. Another of his early correspondents was Mr. Cromwell, of whom I have learned nothing particular but that he used to ride a-hunting in a tie-wig. He was fond, and perhaps vain, of amusing himself with poetry and criticism; and sometimes sent his performances to Pope, who did not forbear such remarks as were now-and-then unwelcome. Pope, in his turn, put the juvenile version of "Statius" into his hands for correction. Their correspondence afforded the public its first knowledge of Pope's epistolary powers; for his Letters were given by Cromwell to one Mrs. Thomas; and she many years afterwards sold them to Curll, who inserted them in a volume of his *Miscellanies*.

Walsh, a name yet preserved among the minor poets, was one of his first encouragers. His regard was gained by the pastorals, and from him Pope received the counsel from which he seems to have regulated his studies. Walsh advised him to correctness, which, as he told him, the English poets had hitherto neglected, and which therefore was left to him as a basis of fame; and being delighted with rural poems, recommended to him to write a pastoral comedy, like those which are read so eagerly in Italy; a design which Pope probably did not approve, as he did not follow it.

Pope had now declared himself a poet; and thinking himself entitled to poetical conversation, began at seventeen to frequent Will's, a coffee-house on the north side of Russell-street, in Covent-garden, where the wits of that time used to assemble, and where Dryden had, when he lived, been accustomed to preside. During this period of his life he was indefatigably diligent, and insatiably curious; wanting health for violent, and money for expensive pleasures, and having excited in himself very strong desires of intellectual eminence, he spent much of his time over his books; but he read only to store his mind with facts and images, seizing all that his authors presented with undistinguishing voracity, and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice. In a mind like his, however, all the faculties were at once involuntarily improving. Judgment is forced upon us by experience. He that reads many books must compare one opinion or one style with another; and, when he compares, must necessarily distinguish, reject and prefer. But the account given by himself of his studies was, that from fourteen to twenty he read only for amusement, from twenty to twenty-seven for improvement and instruction; that in the first part of his time he desired only to know, and the second he endeavoured to judge.

The *Pastorals*, which had been for some time handed about among poets and critics, were at last printed (1709) in Tonson's *Miscellany*, in a volume which began with the *Pastorals* of Philips, and ended with those

of Pope. The same year was written the "Essay on Criticism"; a work which displays such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with mankind, and such knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the maturest age and longest experience. It was published about two years afterwards; and, being praised by Addison in the "Spectator," with sufficient liberality, met with so much favour as enraged Dennis, "who," he says, "found himself attacked, without any manner of provocation on his side, and attacked in his person instead of his writings, by one who was wholly a stranger to him, at a time when all the world knew he was persecuted by fortune; and not only saw that this was attempted in a clandestine manner, with the utmost falsehood and calumny, but found that all this was done by a little affected hypocrite, who had nothing in his mouth at the same time but truth, candour, friendship, good-nature, humanity, and magnanimity." How the attack was clandestine is not easily perceived, nor how his person is depreciated; but he seems to have known something of Pope's character, in whom may be discovered an appetite to talk too frequently of his own virtues. The pamphlet is such as rage might be expected to dictate. He supposes himself to be asked two questions; whether the Essay will succeed, and who or what is the author.

Its success he admits to be secured by the false opinions then prevalent; the author he concludes to be "young and raw."

"First, because he discovers a sufficiency beyond his little ability, and hath rashly undertaken a task infinitely above his force. Secondly, while this little author struts and affects the dictatorial air, he plainly shows, that at the same time he is under the rod: and, while he pretends to give laws to others, is a pedantic slave to authority and opinion. Thirdly, he hath, like schoolboys, borrowed both from living and dead. Fourthly, he knows not his own mind, and frequently contradicts himself. Fifthly, he is almost perpetually in the wrong."

All these positions he attempts to prove by quotations and remarks; but his desire to do mischief is greater than his power. He has, however, justly criticized some passages in these lines:

*There are whom Heaven has bless'd with store of wit,
Yet want as much again to manage it:
For wit and judgment ever are at strife —*

It is apparent that wit has two meanings, and that what is wanted, though called wit, is truly judgment. So far Dennis is undoubtedly right; but not content with argument, he will have a little mirth, and triumphs over the first couplet in terms too elegant to be forgotten. "By the way, what rare numbers are here! Would not one swear that this youngster had espoused some antiquated Muse, who had sued out a divorce on account of impotence, from some superannuated sinner; and, having been p—xed

by her former spouse, has got the gout in her decrepit age, which makes her hobble so damnably." This was the man who would reform a nation sinking into barbarity.

In another place Pope himself allowed that Dennis had detected one of those blunders which are called "bulls." The first edition had this line:

What is this wit —

Where wanted scorn'd; and envied where acquired?

"How," says the critic, "can wit be scorned where it is not? Is not this a figure frequently employed in Hibernian land? The person that wants this wit may indeed be scorned, but the scorn shows the honour which the contemner has for wit." Of this remark Pope made the proper use, by correcting the passage.

I have preserved, I think, all that is reasonable in Dennis's criticism; it remains that justice be done to his delicacy. "For his acquaintance (says Dennis) he names Mr. Walsh, who had by no means the qualification which this author reckons absolutely necessary to a critic, it being very certain that he was, like this Essayer, a very indifferent poet; he loved to be well dressed; and I remember a little young gentleman whom Mr. Walsh used to take into his company as a double foil to his person and capacity. Enquire, between Sunnyn-hill and Oakingham, for a young, short, squab gentleman, the very bow of the God of Love, and tell me whether he be a proper author to make personal reflexions? — He may extol the ancients, but he has reason to thank the gods that he was born a modern; for had he been born of Grecian parents, and his father consequently had by law had the absolute disposal of him, his life had been no longer than that of one of his poems, the life of half a day. — Let the person of a gentleman of his parts be never so contemptible, his inward man is ten times more ridiculous; it being impossible that his outward form, though it be that of downright monkey, should differ so much from human shape as his unthinking, immaterial part does from human understanding." Thus began the hostility between Pope and Dennis, which, though it was suspended for a short time, never was appeased. Pope seems, at first, to have attacked him wantonly; but though he always professed to despise him, he discovers, by mentioning him very often, that he felt his force or his venom.

Of his Essay, Pope declared that he did not expect the sale to be quick, because "not one gentleman in sixty, even of liberal education, could understand it." The gentlemen, and the education of that time, seem to have been of a lower character than they are of this. He mentioned a thousand copies as a numerous impression.

Dennis was not his only censor: the zealous Papists thought the monks treated with too much contempt, and Erasmus too studiously praised; but to these objections he had not much regard.

The "Essay" has been translated into French by Hamilton, author of the "Comte de Grammont," whose version was never printed, by Robotham, secretary to the king for Hanover, and by Resnel; and commented by Dr. Warburton, who has discovered in it such order and connexion as was not perceived by Addison, nor, as is said, intended by the author.

Almost every poem, consisting of precepts, is so far arbitrary and immethodical, that many of the paragraphs may change places with no apparent inconvenience; for of two or more positions, depending upon some remote and general principle, there is seldom any cogent reason why one should precede the other. But for the order in which they stand, whatever it be, a little ingenuity may easily give a reason. "It is possible," says Hooker, "that, by long circumduction, from any one truth all truth may be inferred." Of all homogeneous truths, at least of all truths respecting the same general end, in whatever series they may be produced, a concatenation by intermediate ideas may be formed, such as, when it is once shown, shall appear natural; but if this order be reversed, another mode of connexion equally specious may be found or made. Aristotle is praised for naming Fortitude first of the cardinal virtues, as that without which no other virtue can steadily be practised; but he might, with equal propriety, have placed Prudence and Justice before it; since without Prudence, Fortitude is mad; without Justice, it is mischievous. As the end of method is perspicuity, that series is sufficiently regular that avoids obscurity; and where there is no obscurity, it will not be difficult to discover method.

In the "Spectator" was published the "Messiah," which he first submitted to the perusal of Steele, and corrected in compliance with his criticisms. It is reasonable to infer, from his Letters, that the verses on the "Unfortunate Lady," were written about the time when his "Essay" was published. The lady's name and adventures I have sought with fruitless enquiry. I can therefore tell no more than I have learned from Mr. Ruffhead, who writes with the confidence of one who could trust his information. She was a woman of eminent rank and large fortune, the ward of an uncle, who, having given her a proper education, expected, like other guardians, that she should make at least an equal match; and such he proposed to her, but found it rejected in favour of a young gentleman of inferior condition. Having discovered the correspondence between the two lovers, and finding the young lady determined to abide by her own choice, he supposed that separation might do what can rarely be done by arguments, and sent her into a foreign country, where she was obliged to converse only with those from whom her uncle had nothing to fear. Her lover took care to repeat his vows; but his letters were intercepted and carried to her guardian, who directed her to be watched with still greater vigilance, till of this restraint she grew so impatient, that she

bribed a woman servant to procure her a sword, which she directed to her heart.

From this account, given with evident intent to raise the lady's character, it does not appear that she had any claim to praise, nor much to compassion. She seems to have been impatient, violent, and ungovernable. Her uncle's power could not have lasted long; the hour of liberty and choice would have come in time. But her desires were too hot for delay, and she liked self-murder better than suspense. Nor is it discovered that the uncle, whoever he was, is with much justice delivered to posterity as "a false guardian"; he seems to have done only that for which a guardian is appointed; he endeavoured to direct his niece till she should be able to direct herself. Poetry has not often been worse employed than in dignifying the amorous fury of a raving girl.

Not long after, he wrote the "Rape of the Lock," the most airy, the most ingenious, and the most delightful of all his compositions, occasioned by a frolic of gallantry, rather too familiar, in which Lord Petre cut off a lock of Mrs. Arabella Fermor's hair. This, whether stealth or violence, was so much resented, that the commerce of the two families, before very friendly, was interrupted. Mr. Caryl, a gentleman who, being secretary to King James's queen, had followed his mistress into France, and who, being the author of "Sir Solomon Single," a comedy, and some translations, was entitled to the notice of a wit, solicited Pope to endeavour a reconciliation by a ludicrous poem, which might bring both the parties to a better temper. In compliance with Caryl's request, though his name was for a long time marked only by the first and last letter, C—I, a poem of two cantos was written (1711), as is said, in a fortnight, and sent to the offended lady, who liked it well enough to show it; and, with the usual process of literary transactions, the author, dreading a surreptitious edition, was forced to publish it.

The event is said to have been such as was desired, the pacification and diversion of all to whom it related, except Sir George Brown, who complained with some bitterness, that, in the character of Sir Plume, he was made to talk nonsense. Whether all this be true I have some doubt; for at Paris, a few years ago, a niece of Mrs. Fermor, who presided in an English convent, mentioned Pope's work with very little gratitude, rather as an insult than an honour; and she may be supposed to have inherited the opinion of her family. At its first appearance it was termed by Addison "merum sal." Pope, however, saw that it was capable of improvement; and, having luckily contrived to borrow his machinery from the Rosicrucians, imparted the scheme with which his head was teeming to Addison, who told him that his work, as it stood, was "a delicious little thing," and gave him no encouragement to retouch it.

This has been too hastily considered as an instance of Addison's jealousy; for, as he could not guess the conduct of the new design, or the

possibilities of pleasure comprised in a fiction of which there had been no examples, he might very reasonably and kindly persuade the author to acquiesce in his own prosperity, and forbear an attempt which he considered as an unnecessary hazard. Addison's counsel was happily rejected. Pope foresaw the future efflorescence of imagery then budding in his mind, and resolved to spare no art, or industry of cultivation. The soft luxuriance of his fancy was already shooting, and all the gay varieties of diction were ready at his hand to colour and embellish it. His attempt was justified by its success. The "Rape of the Lock" stands forward, in the classes of literature, as the most exquisite example of ludicrous poetry. Berkeley congratulated him upon the display of powers more truly poetical than he had shown before; with elegance of description and justness of precepts, he had now exhibited boundless fertility of invention. He always considered the intermixture of the machinery with the action as his most successful exertion of poetical art. He indeed could never afterwards produce anything of such unexampled excellence. Those performances, which strike with wonder, are combinations of skilful genius with happy casualty; and it is not likely that any felicity, like the discovery of a new race of preternatural agents, should happen twice to the same man.

Of this poem, the author was, I think, allowed to enjoy the praise for a long time without disturbance. Many years afterwards Dennis published some remarks upon it, with very little force, and with no effect; for the opinion of the public was already settled, and it was no longer at the mercy of criticism.

About this time he published the "Temple of Fame," which, as he tells Steele in their correspondence, he had written two years before; that is, when he was only twenty-two years old, an early time of life for so much learning and so much observation as that work exhibits. On this poem Dennis afterwards published some remarks, of which the most reasonable is, that some of the lines represent motion as exhibited by sculpture.

Of the Epistle from "Eloisa to Abelard," I do not know the date. His first inclination to attempt a composition of that tender kind arose, as Mr. Savage told me, from his perusal of Prior's "Nut-brown Maid." How much he has surpassed Prior's work it is not necessary to mention, when perhaps it may be said with justice, that he has excelled every composition of the same kind. The mixture of religious hope and resignation gives an elevation and dignity to disappointed love, which images merely natural cannot bestow. The gloom of a convent strikes the imagination with far greater force than the solitude of a grove. This piece was, however, not much his favourite in his latter years, though I never heard upon what principle he slighted it.

In the next year (1713) he published "Windsor Forest"; of which part was, as he relates, written at sixteen, about the same time as his *Pastorals*;

and the latter part was added afterwards; where the addition begins we are not told. The lines relating to the peace confess their own date. It is dedicated to Lord Lansdowne, who was then in high reputation and influence among the Tories; and it is said, that the conclusion of the poem gave great pain to Addison, both as a poet and a politician. Reports like this are often spread with boldness very disproportionate to their evidence. Why should Addison receive any particular disturbance from the last lines of "Windsor Forest"? If contrariety of opinion could poison a politician, he could not live a day; and, as a poet, he must have felt Pope's force of genius much more from many other parts of his works. The pain that Addison might feel it is not likely that he would confess; and it is certain that he so well suppressed his discontent, that Pope now thought himself his favourite; for, having been consulted in the revisal of "Cato," he introduced it by a prologue; and, when Dennis published his Remarks, undertook, not indeed to vindicate, but to revenge his friend, by a "Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis."

There is reason to believe that Addison gave no encouragement to this disingenuous hostility; for, says Pope, in a letter to him, "indeed your opinion, that 'tis entirely to be neglected, would be my own in my own case; but I felt more warmth here than I did when I first saw his book against myself (though indeed in two minutes it made me heartily merry)." Addison was not a man on whom such cant of sensibility could make much impression. He left the pamphlet to itself, having disowned it to Dennis, and perhaps did not think Pope to have deserved much by his officiousness.

This year was printed in the "Guardian" the ironical comparison between the Pastorals of Philips and Pope; a composition of artifice, criticism, and literature, to which nothing equal will easily be found. The superiority of Pope is so ingeniously dissembled, and the feeble lines of Philips so skilfully preferred, that Steele, being deceived, was unwilling to print the paper, lest Pope should be offended. Addison immediately saw the writer's design; and, as it seems, had malice enough to conceal his discovery, and to permit a publication which, by making his friend Philips ridiculous, made him for ever an enemy to Pope.

It appears that about this time Pope had a strong inclination to unite the art of painting with that of poetry, and put himself under the tuition of Jervas. He was near-sighted, and therefore not formed by nature for a painter: he tried, however, how far he could advance, and sometimes persuaded his friends to sit. A picture of Betterton, supposed to be drawn by him, was in the possession of Lord Mansfield: if this was taken from the life, he must have begun to paint earlier; for Betterton was now dead. Pope's ambition of this new art produced some encomiastic verses to Jervas, which certainly show his power as a poet; but I have been told that they betray his ignorance of painting. He appears to have regarded Betterton with kindness and esteem; and after his death published, under his

name, a version into modern English of Chaucer's Prologues, and one of his Tales, which, as was related by Mr. Harte, were believed to have been the performance of Pope himself by Fenton, who made him a gay offer of five pounds, if he would show them in the hand of Betterton.

The next year (1713) produced a bolder attempt, by which profit was sought as well as praise. The poems which he had hitherto written, however they might have diffused his name, had made very little addition to his fortune. The allowance which his father made him, though, proportioned to what he had, it might be liberal, could not be large; his religion hindered him from the occupation of any civil employment; and he complained that he wanted even money to buy books. He therefore resolved to try how far the favour of the public extended, by soliciting a subscription to a version of the "Iliad," with large notes. To print by subscription was, for some time, a practice peculiar to the English. The first considerable work, for which this expedient was employed, is said to have been Dryden's "Virgil"; and it had been tried again with great success when the "Tatlers" were collected into volumes.

There was reason to believe that Pope's attempt would be successful. He was in the full bloom of reputation, and was personally known to almost all whom dignity of employment or splendour of reputation had made eminent; he conversed indifferently with both parties, and never disturbed the public with his political opinions; and it might be naturally expected, as each faction then boasted its literary zeal, that the great men, who on other occasions practised all the violence of opposition, would emulate each other in their encouragement of a poet who delighted all, and by whom none have been offended. With these hopes, he offered an English "Iliad" to subscribers, in six volumes in quarto, for six guineas; a sum, according to the value of money at that time, by no means inconsiderable, and greater than I believe to have been ever asked before. His proposal, however, was very favourably received; and the patrons of literature were busy to recommend his undertaking, and promote his interest. Lord Oxford, indeed, lamented that such a genius should be wasted upon a work not original; but proposed no means by which he might live without it. Addison recommended caution and moderation, and advised him not to be content with the praise of half the nation, when he might be universally favoured.

The greatness of the design, the popularity of the author, and the attention of the literary world, naturally raised such expectations of the future sale, that the booksellers made their offers with great eagerness; but the highest bidder was Bernard Lintot, who became proprietor, on condition of supplying, at his own expense, all the copies which were to be delivered to subscribers, or presented to friends, and paying two hundred pounds for every volume.

Of the quartos, it was, I believe, stipulated that none should be printed

but for the author, that the subscription might not be depreciated; but Lintot impressed the same pages upon a small folio, and paper perhaps a little thinner; and sold exactly at half the price, for half a guinea each volume, books so little inferior to the quartos, that by fraud of trade, those folios, being afterwards shortened by cutting away the top and bottom, were sold as copies printed for the subscribers.

Lintot printed two hundred and fifty on royal paper in folio, for two guineas a volume; of the small folio, having printed seventeen hundred and fifty copies of the first volume, he reduced the number in the other volumes to a thousand. It is unpleasant to relate that the bookseller, after all his hopes, and all his liberality, was, by a very unjust and illegal action, defrauded of his profit. An edition of the English "Iliad" was printed in Holland in duodecimo, and imported clandestinely for the gratification of those who were impatient to read what they could not yet afford to buy. This fraud could only be counteracted by an edition equally cheap and more commodious; and Lintot was compelled to contract his folio at once into duodecimo, and lose the advantage of an intermediate gradation. The notes, which in the Dutch copies were placed at the end of each book, as they had been in the large volumes, were now subjoined to the text in the same page, and are therefore more easily consulted. Of this edition two thousand five hundred were first printed, and five thousand a few weeks afterwards; but indeed great numbers were necessary to produce considerable profit.

Pope, having now emitted his proposals, and engaged not only his own reputation, but in some degree that of his friends who patronized his subscription, began to be frightened at his own undertaking; and finding himself at first embarrassed with difficulties, which retarded and oppressed him, he was for a time timorous and uneasy, had his nights disturbed by dreams of long journeys through unknown ways, and wished, as he said "that somebody would hang him." This misery, however, was not of long continuance; he grew by degrees more acquainted with Homer's images and expressions, and practice increased his facility of versification. In a short time he represents himself as despatching regularly fifty verses a day, which would show him, by an easy computation, the termination of his labour. His own diffidence was not his only vexation. He that asks a subscription soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him defame him. He that wants money will rather be thought angry than poor: and he that wishes to save his money conceals his avarice by his malice. Addison had hinted his suspicion that Pope was too much a Tory; and some of the Tories suspected his principles, because he had contributed to the "Guardian," which was carried on by Steele.

To those who censured his politics were added enemies yet more dangerous, who called in question his knowledge of Greek, and his qualifica-

tions for a translator of Homer. To these he made no public opposition; but in one of his Letters escapes from them as well as he can. At an age like his, for he was not more than twenty-five, with an irregular education, and a course of life of which much seems to have passed in conversation, it is not very likely that he overflowed with Greek. But when he felt himself deficient he sought assistance; and what man of learning would refuse to help him? Minute enquiries into the force of words are less necessary to translating Homer than other poets, because his positions are general, and his representations natural, with very little dependence on local or temporary customs, on those changeable scenes of artificial life, which, by mingling original with accidental notions, and crowding the mind with images which time effaces, produces ambiguity in diction, and obscurity in books. To this open display of unadulterated nature it must be ascribed, that Homer has fewer passages of doubtful meaning than any other poet either in the learned or in modern languages. I have read of a man who, being, by his ignorance of Greek, compelled to gratify his curiosity with the Latin printed on the opposite page, declared that, from the rude simplicity of the lines literally rendered, he formed nobler ideas of the Homeric majesty, than from the laboured elegance of polished versions. Those literal translations were always at hand, and from them he could easily obtain his author's sense with sufficient certainty; and among the readers of Homer the number is very small of those who find much in the Greek more than in the Latin, except the music of the numbers.

If more help was wanting, he had the poetical translation of Eobanus Hessus, an unwearied writer of Latin verses; he had the French Homers of La Valterie and Dacier, and the English of Chapman, Hobbes, and Ogilby. With Chapman, whose work, though now totally neglected, seems to have been popular almost to the end of the last century, he had very frequent consultations, and perhaps never translated any passage till he had read his version, which indeed he has been sometimes suspected of using instead of the original. Notes were likewise to be provided; for the six volumes would have been very little more than six pamphlets without them. What the mere perusal of the text could suggest, Pope wanted no assistance to collect or methodize; but more was necessary; many pages were to be filled, and learning must supply materials to wit and judgment. Something might be gathered from Dacier; but no man loves to be indebted to his contemporaries, and Dacier was accessible to common readers. Eustathius was therefore necessarily consulted. To read Eustathius, of whose work there was then no Latin version, I suspect Pope, if he had been willing, not to have been able; some other was therefore to be found, who had leisure as well as abilities; and he was doubtless most readily employed who would do much work for little money.

The history of the notes has never been traced. Broome, in his preface to his poems, declares himself the commentator "in part upon the Iliad";

and it appears from Fenton's Letter, preserved in the Museum, that Broome was at first engaged in consulting Eustathius; but that after a time, whatever was the reason, he desisted; another man of Cambridge was then employed, who soon grew weary of the work; and a third, that was recommended by Thirlby, is now discovered to have been Jortin, a man since well known to the learned world, who complained that Pope, having accepted and approved his performance, never testified any curiosity to see him, and who professed to have forgotten the terms on which he worked. The terms which Fenton uses are very mercantile: "I think at first sight that his performance is very commendable, and have sent word for him to finish the seventeenth book, and to send it with his demands for his trouble. I have here enclosed the specimen; if the rest come before the return, I will keep them till I receive your order."

Broome then offered his service a second time, which was probably accepted, as they had afterwards a closer correspondence. Parnell contributed the "Life of Homer," which Pope found so harsh, that he took great pains in correcting it; and by his own diligence, with such help as kindness or money could procure him, in somewhat more than five years he completed his version of the "Iliad," with the notes. He began it in 1712, his twenty-fifth year; and concluded it in 1718, his thirtieth year. When we find him translating fifty lines a day, it is natural to suppose that he would have brought his work to a more speedy conclusion. The "Iliad," containing less than sixteen thousand verses, might have been despatched in less than three hundred and twenty days by fifty verses in a day. The notes, compiled with the assistance of his mercenaries, could not be supposed to require more time than the text. According to this calculation, the progress of Pope may seem to have been slow; but the distance is commonly very great between actual performances and speculative possibility. It is natural to suppose, that as much as has been done today may be done tomorrow; but on the morrow some difficulty emerges, or some external impediment obstructs. Indolence, interruption, business, and pleasure, all take their turns of retardation; and every long work is lengthened by a thousand causes that can, and ten thousand that cannot, be recounted. Perhaps no extensive and multifarious performance was ever effected within the term originally fixed in the undertaker's mind. He that runs against Time has an antagonist not subject to casualties.

The encouragement given to this translation, though report seems to have overrated it, was such as the world has not often seen. The subscribers were five hundred and seventy-five. The copies, for which subscriptions were given, were six hundred and fifty-four; and only six hundred and sixty were printed. For these copies Pope had nothing to pay; he therefore received, including the two hundred pounds a volume, five thousand three hundred and twenty pounds four shillings, without deduction, as the books were supplied by Lintot.

By the success of his subscription Pope was relieved from those pecuniary distresses with which, notwithstanding his popularity, he had hitherto struggled. Lord Oxford had often lamented his disqualification for public employment, but never proposed a pension. While the translation of "Homer" was in its progress, Mr. Craggs, then secretary of state, offered to procure him a pension, which, at least during his ministry, might be enjoyed with secrecy. This was not accepted by Pope, who told him, however, that, if he should be pressed with want of money, he would send to him for occasional supplies. Craggs was not long in power, and was never solicited for money by Pope, who disdained to beg what he did not want.

With the product of this subscription, which he had too much discretion to squander, he secured his future life from want, by considerable annuities. The estate of the Duke of Buckingham was found to have been charged with five hundred pounds a year, payable to Pope, which doubtless his translation enabled him to purchase.

It cannot be unwelcome to literary curiosity, that I deduce thus minutely the history of the English "Iliad." It is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen; and its publication must therefore be considered as one of the great events in the annals of Learning. To those who have skill to estimate the excellence and difficulty of this great work, it must be very desirable to know how it was performed, and by what gradations it advanced to correctness. Of such an intellectual process the knowledge has very rarely been attainable; but happily there remains the original copy of the "Iliad," which, being obtained by Bolingbroke as a curiosity, descended from him to Mallet, and is now, by the solicitation of the late Dr. Maty, repositied in the Museum. Between this manuscript, which is written upon accidental fragments of paper and the printed edition, there must have been an intermediate copy, that was perhaps destroyed as it returned from the press.

From the first copy I have procured a few transcripts, and shall exhibit first the printed lines; then, in a small print, those of the manuscripts, with all their variations. Those words in the small print, which are given in Italics, are cancelled in the copy, and the words placed under them adopted in their stead.²

The beginning of the first book stands thus:

*The wrath of Peleus' son, the direful spring
Of all the Grecian woes, O Goddess, sing,
That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign
The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain
The stern Pelides' rage, O Goddess, sing,
wrath*

² I have omitted a number of these examples, which Johnson quotes at length.—
Editor.

*Of all the woes of Greece the fatal spring,
Grecian
That strewed with warriors dead the Phrygian plain,
heroes
And peopled the dark hell with heroes slain;
fill'd the shady hell with chiefs untimely
Whose limbs, unburied on the naked shore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore,
Since great Achilles and Atrides strove;
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.
Whose limbs, unburied on the hostile shore,
Devouring dogs and greedy vultures tore,
Since first Atrides and Achilles strove;
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.*

Of these specimens every man who has cultivated poetry, or who delights to trace the mind from the rudeness of its first conceptions to the elegance of its last, will naturally desire a great number; but most other readers are already tired, and I am not writing only to poets and philosophers.

The “Iliad” was published volume by volume, as the translation proceeded: the four first books appeared in 1715. The expectation of this work was undoubtedly high, and every man who had connected his name with criticism, or poetry, was desirous of such intelligence as might enable him to talk upon the popular topic. Halifax, who, by having been first a poet, and then a patron of poetry, had acquired the right of being a judge, was willing to hear some books while they were yet unpublished. Of this rehearsal Pope afterwards gave the following account:

“The famous Lord Halifax was rather a pretender to taste than really possessed of it. — When I had finished the two or three first books of my translation of the ‘Iliad,’ that Lord desired to have the pleasure of hearing them read at his house. Addison, Congreve, and Garth, were there at the reading. In four or five places, Lord Halifax stopped me very civilly, and with a speech each time of much the same kind, ‘I beg your pardon, Mr. Pope; but there is something in that passage that does not quite please me. Be so good as to mark the place, and consider it a little at your leisure. I am sure you can give it a little turn.’ — I returned from Lord Halifax’s with Dr. Garth, in his chariot; and, as we were going along, was saying to the Doctor, that my lord had laid me under a great deal of difficulty by such loose and general observations; that I had been thinking over the passages almost ever since, and could not guess at what it was that offended his lordship in either of them. Garth laughed heartily at my embarrassment: said, I had not been long enough acquainted with Lord Halifax to know his way yet; that I need not puzzle myself about looking those places over and

over when I got home. 'All you need do (says he) is to leave them just as they are; call on Lord Halifax two or three months hence, thank him for his kind observations on those passages, and then read them to him as altered. I have known him much longer than you have, and will be answerable for the event.' I followed his advice; waited on Lord Halifax some time after; said, I hoped he would find his objections to those passages removed; read them to him exactly as they were at first: and his lordship was extremely pleased with them, and cried out, 'Ay, now they are perfectly right: nothing can be better.'"

It is seldom that the great or the wise suspect that they are despised or cheated. Halifax, thinking this a lucky opportunity of securing immortality, made some advances of favour and some overtures of advantage to Pope, which he seems to have received with sullen coldness. All our knowledge of this transaction is derived from a single letter (Dec. 1, 1714), in which Pope says, "I am obliged to you, both for the favours you have done me, and those you intend me. I distrust neither your will nor your memory; when it is to do good; and if I ever become troublesome or solicitous, it is not to be out of expectation, but out of gratitude. Your lordship may fouse me to live agreeably in the town, or contentedly in the country, which is really all the difference I set between an easy fortune and a small one. It is indeed a high strain of generosity in you to think of making me easy all my life, only because I have been so happy as to divert you some few hours: but, if I may have leave to add it is because you think me no enemy to my native country, there will appear a better reason; for I must of consequence be very much (as I sincerely am) yours, etc."

These voluntary offers, and this faint acceptance, ended without effect. The patron was not accustomed to such frigid gratitude; and the poet fed his own pride with the dignity of independence. They probably were suspicious of each other. Pope would not dedicate till he saw at what rate his praise was valued; he would be "troublesome out of gratitude, not expectation." Halifax thought himself entitled to confidence; and would give nothing, unless he knew what he should receive. Their commerce had its beginning in hope of praise on one side, and of money on the other, and ended because Pope was less eager of money than Halifax of praise. It is not likely that Halifax had any personal benevolence to Pope; it is evident that Pope looked on Halifax with scorn and hatred.

The reputation of this great work failed of gaining him a patron; but it deprived him of a friend. Addison and he were now at the head of poetry and criticism; and both in such a state of elevation, that, like the two rivals in the Roman state, one could no longer bear an equal, nor the other a superior. Of the gradual abatement of kindness between friends, the beginning is often scarcely discernible to themselves, and the process is continued by petty provocations, and incivilities sometimes peevishly returned, and sometimes contemptuously neglected, which would escape

all attention but that of pride, and drop from any memory but that of resentment. That the quarrel of these two wits should be minutely deduced, is not to be expected from a writer to whom, as Homer says, "nothing but rumour has reached, and who has no personal knowledge."

Pope doubtless approached Addison, when the reputation of their wit first brought them together, with the respect due to a man whose abilities were acknowledged, and who, having attained that eminence to which he was himself aspiring, had in his hands the distribution of literary fame. He paid court with sufficient diligence by his Prologue to "Cato," by his abuse of Dennis, and with praise yet more direct, by his poem on the "Dialogues on Medals," of which the immediate publication was then intended. In all this there was no hypocrisy; for he confessed that he found in Addison something more pleasing than in any other man.

It may be supposed, that as Pope saw himself favoured by the world, and more frequently compared his own powers with those of others, his confidence increased, and his submission lessened; and that Addison felt no delight from the advances of a young wit, who might soon contend with him for the highest place. Every great man, of whatever kind be his greatness, has among his friends those who officiously, or insidiously, quicken his attention to offences, heighten his disgust, and stimulate his resentment. Of such adherents Addison doubtless had many; and Pope was now too high to be without them. From the emission and reception of the Proposals for the "Iliad," the kindness of Addison seems to have abated. Jervas the painter once pleased himself (Aug. 20, 1714) with imagining that he had re-established their friendship; and wrote to Pope that Addison once suspected him of too close a confederacy with Swift, but was now satisfied with his conduct. To this Pope answered, a week after, that his engagements to Swift were such as his services in regard to the subscription demanded, and that the Tories never put him under the necessity of asking leave to be grateful. "But," says he, "as Mr. Addison must be the judge in what regards himself, and seems to have no very just one in regard to me, so I must own to you I expect nothing but civility from him." In the same letter he mentions Philips, as having been busy to kindle animosity between them; but in a letter to Addison, he expresses some consciousness of behaviour, inattentively deficient in respect.

Of Swift's industry in promoting the subscription there remains the testimony of Kennet, no friend to either him or Pope.

"Nov. 2, 1713, Dr. Swift came into the coffee-house, and had a bow from everybody but me, who, I confess, could not but despise him. When I came to the antechamber to wait, before prayers, Dr. Swift was the principal man of talk and business, and acted as master of requests. Then he instructed a young nobleman that the *best Poet in England* was Mr. Pope (a papist) who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse,

for which *he must have them all subscribe*: for, says he, the author *shall not* begin to print till *I have* a thousand guineas for him."

About this time it is likely that Steele, who was, with all his political fury, good-natured and officious, procured an interview between these angry rivals, which ended in aggravated malevolence. On this occasion, if the reports be true, Pope made his complaint with frankness and spirit, as a man undeservedly neglected or opposed; and Addison affected a contemptuous unconcern, and, in a calm even voice, reproached Pope with his vanity, and, telling him of the improvements which his early works had received from his own remarks and those of Steele, said, that he, being now engaged in public business, had no longer any care for his poetical reputation: nor had any other desire, with regard to Pope, than that he should not, by too much arrogance, alienate the public.

To this Pope is said to have replied with great keenness and severity, upbraiding Addison with perpetual dependence, and with the abuse of those qualifications which he had obtained at the public cost, and charging him with mean endeavours to obstruct the progress of rising merit. The contest rose so high, that they parted at last without any interchange of civility.

The first volume of "Homer" was (1715) in time published; and a rival version of the first "Iliad," for rivals the time of their appearance inevitably made them, was immediately printed, with the name of Tickell. It was soon perceived that, among the followers of Addison, Tickell had the preference, and the critics and poets divided into factions. "I," says Pope, "have the town, that is, the mob on my side; but it is not uncommon for the smaller party to supply by industry what it wants in numbers. I appeal to the people as my rightful judges, and, while they are not inclined to condemn me, shall not fear the high-flyers at Button's." This opposition he immediately imputed to Addison, and complained of it in terms sufficiently resentful to Craggs, their common friend.

When Addison's opinion was asked, he declared the versions to be both good, but Tickell's the best that had ever been written; and sometimes said, that they were both good, but that Tickell had more of "Homer."

Pope was now sufficiently irritated; his reputation and his interest were at hazard. He once intended to print together the four versions of Dryden, Maynwaring, Pope, and Tickell, that they might be readily compared, and fairly estimated. This design seems to have been defeated by the refusal of Tonson, who was the proprietor of the other three versions.

Pope intended, at another time, a rigorous criticism of Tickell's translation, and had marked a copy, which I have seen, in all places that appeared defective. But, while he was thus meditating defence or revenge, his adversary sunk before him without a blow; the voice of the public was not long divided, and the preference universally given to Pope's performance. He was convinced, by adding one circumstance to another, that

the other translation was the work of Addison himself; but, if he knew it in Addison's lifetime, it does not appear that he told it. He left his illustrious antagonist to be punished by what has been considered as the most painful of all reflexions — the remembrance of a crime perpetrated in vain. The other circumstances of their quarrel were thus related by Pope:

"Philips seemed to have been encouraged to abuse me in coffee-houses, and conversations: and Gildon wrote a thing about Wycherley, in which he had abused both me and my relations very grossly. Lord Warwick himself told me one day, that it was in vain for me to endeavour to be well with Mr. Addison; that his jealous temper would never admit of a settled friendship between us: and, to convince me of what he had said, assured me, that Addison had encouraged Gildon to publish those scandals, and had given him ten guineas after they were published. The next day, while I was heated with what I had heard, I wrote a letter to Mr. Addison, to let him know that I was not unacquainted with this behaviour of his; that, if I was to speak severely of him in return for it, it should not be in such a dirty way; that I should rather tell him, himself, fairly of his faults, and allow his good qualities; and that it should be something in the following manner: I then adjoined the first sketch of what has since been called my satire on Addison. Mr. Addison used me very civilly ever after."

The verses on Addison, when they were sent to Atterbury, were considered by him as the most excellent of Pope's performances; and the writer was advised, since he knew where his strength lay, not to suffer it to remain unemployed. This year (1715) being, by the subscription, enabled to live more by choice, having persuaded his father to sell their estate at Binfield, he purchased, I think only for his life, that house at Twickenham to which his residence afterwards procured so much celebration, and removed thither with his father and mother. Here he planted the vines and the quincunx which his verses mention; and being under the necessity of making a subterraneous passage to a garden on the other side of the road, he adorned it with fossil bodies, and dignified it with the title of a grotto; a place of silence and retreat, from which he endeavoured to persuade his friends and himself that cares and passions could be excluded.

A grotto is not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than exclude the sun; but Pope's excavation was requisite as an entrance to his garden; and, as some men try to be proud of their defects, he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience, and vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage. It may be frequently remarked of the studious and speculative, that they are proud of trifles, and that their amusements seem frivolous and childish: whether it be that men, conscious of great reputation, think themselves above the reach of censure, and safe in the admission of negligent indulgences, or that mankind expect from elevated genius an uniformity of greatness, and watch its degradation with malicious wonder; like him who,

having followed with his eye an eagle into the clouds, should lament that she ever descended to a perch.

While the volumes of his "Homer" were annually published, he collected his former works (1717) into one quarto volume, to which he prefixed a preface, written with great sprightliness and elegance, which was afterwards reprinted, with some passages subjoined that he at first omitted: other marginal additions of the same kind he made in the later editions of his poems. Waller remarks, that poets lose half their praise, because the reader knows not what they have blotted. Pope's voracity of fame taught him the art of obtaining the accumulated honour, both of what he had published, and of what he had suppressed. In this year his father died suddenly, in his seventy-fifth year, having passed twenty-nine years in privacy. He is not known but by the character which his son has given him. If the money with which he retired was all gotten by himself, he had traded very successfully in times when sudden riches were rarely attainable.

The publication of the "Iliad" was at last completed in 1720. The splendour and success of this work raised Pope many enemies, that endeavoured to depreciate his abilities. Burnet, who was afterwards a judge of no mean reputation, censured him in a piece called "Homerides" before it was published. Duckett likewise endeavoured to make him ridiculous. Dennis was the perpetual persecutor of all his studies. But, whoever his critics were, their writings are lost; and the names, which are preserved, are preserved in the "Dunciad."

In this disastrous year (1720) of national infatuation, when more riches than Peru can boast were expected from the South Sea, when the contagion of avarice tainted every mind, and even poets panted after wealth, Pope was seized with the universal passion, and ventured some of his money. The stock rose in its price; and for a while he thought himself the lord of thousands. But this dream of happiness did not last long; and he seems to have waked soon enough to get clear with the loss of what he once thought himself to have won, and perhaps not wholly of that.

Next year he published some select poems of his friend Dr. Parnell, with a very elegant Dedication to the Earl of Oxford; who, after all his struggles and dangers, then lived in retirement, still under the frown of a victorious faction, who could take no pleasure in hearing his praise. He gave the same year (1721) an edition of Shakespeare. His name was now of so much authority, that Tonson thought himself entitled, by annexing it, to demand a subscription of six guineas for Shakespeare's plays in six quarto volumes; nor did his expectation much deceive him; for, of seven hundred and fifty which he printed, he dispersed a great number at the price proposed. The reputation of that edition indeed sunk afterwards so low, that one hundred and forty copies were sold at sixteen shillings each. On this

undertaking, to which Pope was induced by a reward of two hundred and seventeen pounds twelve shillings, he seems never to have reflected afterwards without vexation; for Theobald, a man of heavy diligence, with very slender powers, first, in a book called "Shakespeare Restored," and then in a formal edition, detected his deficiencies, with all the insolence of victory; and as he was now high enough to be feared and hated, Theobald had from others all the help that could be supplied, by the desire of humbling a haughty character. From this time Pope became an enemy to editors, collators, commentators, and verbal critics; and hoped to persuade the world, that he miscarried in this undertaking only by having a mind too great for such minute employment.

Pope in his edition undoubtedly did many things wrong, and left many things undone; but let him not be defrauded of his due praise. He was the first that knew, at least the first that told, by what helps the text might be improved. If he inspected the early editions negligently, he taught others to be more accurate. In his Preface he expanded with great skill and elegance the character which had been given of Shakespeare by Dryden; and he drew the public attention upon his works, which, though often mentioned, had been little read. Soon after the appearance of the "Iliad," resolving not to let the general kindness cool, he published proposals for a translation of the "Odyssey," in five volumes, for five guineas. He was willing, however, now to have associates in his labour, being either weary with toiling upon another's thoughts, or having heard, as Ruffhead relates, that Fenton and Broome had already begun the work, and liking better to have them confederates than rivals. In the patent, instead of saying that he had "translated" the "Odyssey," and he had said of the "Iliad," he says that he had "undertaken" a translation: and in the proposals, the subscription is said to be not solely for his own use, but for that of "two of his friends who have assisted him in this work."

In 1723, while he was engaged in this new version, he appeared before the Lords at the memorable trial of Bishop Atterbury, with whom he had lived in great familiarity, and frequent correspondence. Atterbury had honestly recommended to him the study of the Popish controversy, in hope of his conversion; to which Pope answered in a manner that cannot much recommend his principles, or his judgment. In questions and projects of learning, they agreed better. He was called at the trial to give an account of Atterbury's domestic life, and private employment, that it might appear how little time he had left for plots. Pope had but few words to utter, and in those few he made several blunders.

His Letters to Atterbury express the utmost esteem, tenderness, and gratitude: "Perhaps," says he, "it is not only in this world that I may have cause to remember the Bishop of Rochester." At their last interview in the Tower, Atterbury presented him with a Bible.

Of the "Odyssey" Pope translated only twelve books; the rest were

the work of Broome and Fenton: the notes were written wholly by Broome, who was not over-liberally rewarded. The public was carefully kept ignorant of the several shares; and an account was subjoined at the conclusion, which is now known not to be true. The first copy of Pope's books, with those of Fenton, are to be seen in the Museum. The parts of Pope are less interlined than the "Iliad"; and the latter books of the "Iliad" less than the former. He grew dexterous by practice, and every sheet enabled him to write the next with more facility. The books of Fenton have very few alterations by the hand of Pope. Those of Broome have not been found; but Pope complained, as it is reported, that he had much trouble in correcting them. His contract with Lintot was the same as for the "Iliad," except that only one hundred pounds were to be paid him for each volume. The number of subscribers were five hundred and seventy-four, and of copies eight hundred and nineteen; so that his profit, when he had paid his assistants, was still very considerable. The work was finished in 1725; and from that time he resolved to make no more translations. The sale did not answer Lintot's expectation; and he then pretended to discover something of a fraud in Pope, and commenced or threatened a suit in Chancery.

On the English "Odyssey" a criticism was published by Spence, at that time Prelector of Poetry at Oxford; a man whose learning was not very great, and whose mind was not very powerful. His criticism, however, was commonly just; what he thought, he thought rightly; and his remarks were recommended by his coolness and candour. In him Pope had the first experience of a critic without malevolence, who thought it as much his duty to display beauties as expose faults; who censured with respect, and praised with alacrity. With this criticism Pope was so little offended, that he sought the acquaintance of the writer, who lived with him from that time in great familiarity, attended him in his last hours, and compiled memorials of his conversation. The regard of Pope recommended him to the great and powerful; and he obtained very valuable preferments in the Church. Not long after, Pope was returning home from a visit in a friend's coach, which, in passing a bridge, was overturned into the water; the windows were closed, and, being unable to force them open he was in danger of immediate death, when the postilion snatched him out by breaking the glass, of which the fragments cut two of his fingers in such a manner, that he lost their use.

Voltaire, who was then in England, sent him a letter of consolation. He had been entertained by Pope at his table, where he talked with so much grossness, that Mrs. Pope was driven from the room. Pope discovered, by a trick, that he was a spy for the Court, and never considered him as a man worthy of confidence. He soon afterwards (1727) joined with Swift, who was then in England, to publish three volumes of Miscellanies, in which, amongst other things, he inserted the "Memoirs

of a Parish Clerk," in ridicule of Burnet's importance in his own History, and a "Debate upon Black and White Horses," written in all the formalities of a legal process by the assistance, as is said, of Mr. Fortescue, afterwards Master of the Rolls. Before these Miscellanies is a preface signed by Swift and Pope, but apparently written by Pope; in which he makes a ridiculous and romantic complaint of the robberies committed upon authors by the clandestine seizure and sale of their papers. He tells, in tragic strains, how "the cabinets of the sick and the closets of the dead have been broken open and ransacked"; as if those violences were often committed for papers of uncertain and accidental value, which are rarely provoked by real treasures; as if epigrams and essays were in danger where gold and diamonds are safe. A cat hunted for his musk is, according to Pope's account, but the emblem of a wit winded by booksellers. His complaint, however, received some attestation; for the same year the letters written by him to Mr. Cromwell in his youth, were sold by Mrs. Thomas to Curll, who printed them.

In these Miscellanies was first published the "Art of Sinking in Poetry," which, by such a train of consequences as usually passes in literary quarrels, gave in a short time, according to Pope's account, occasion to the "Dunciad."

In the following year (1728) he began to put Atterbury's advice in practice; and showed his satirical powers by publishing the "Dunciad," one of his greatest and most elaborate performances, in which he endeavoured to sing into contempt all the writers by whom he had been attacked, and some others whom he thought unable to defend themselves. At the head of the Dunces he placed poor Theobald, whom he accused of ingratitude; but whose real crime was supposed to be that of having revised Shakespeare more happily than himself. This satire had the effect which he intended, by blasting the characters which it touched. Ralph, who, unnecessarily interposing in the quarrel, got a place in a subsequent edition, complained that for a time he was in danger of starving, as the booksellers had no longer any confidence in his capacity. The prevalence of this poem was gradual and slow: the plan, if not wholly new, was little understood by common readers. Many of the allusions required illustration; the names were often expressed only by the initial and final letters, and if they had been printed at length, were such as few had known or recollected. The subject itself had nothing generally interesting, for whom did it concern to know that one or another scribbler was a dunce? If, therefore, it had been possible for those who were attacked to conceal their pain and their resentment, the "Dunciad" might have made its way very slowly in the world. This, however, was not to be expected: every man is of importance to himself, and therefore, in his own opinion, to others; and, supposing the world already acquainted with all his pleasures and his pains, is perhaps the first to publish injuries or misfortunes, which had never

been known unless related by himself, and at which those that hear them will only laugh; for no man sympathizes with the sorrows of vanity.

The history of the "Dunciad" is very minutely related by Pope himself, in a Dedication which he wrote to Lord Middlesex in the name of Savage.

"I will relate the war of the 'Dunces' (for so it has been commonly called), which began in the year 1727, and ended in 1730.

"When Dr. Swift and Mr. Pope thought it proper, for reasons specified in the Preface to their Miscellanies, to publish such little pieces of theirs as had occasionally got abroad, there was added to them the 'Treatise of the Bathos, or the Art of Sinking in Poetry.' It happened that, in one chapter of this piece, the several species of bad poets were ranged in classes, to which were prefixed almost all the letters of the alphabet (the greatest part of them at random); but such was the number of poets eminent in that art, that some one or other took every letter to himself, all fell into so violent a fury, that, for half a year or more, the common newspapers (in most of which they had some property, as being hired writers) were filled with the most abusive falsehoods and scurrilities they could possibly devise; a liberty no way to be wondered at in those people, and in those papers, that, for many years during the uncontrolled licence of the press, had aspersed almost all the great characters of the age; and this with impunity, their own persons and names being utterly secret and obscure. This gave Mr. Pope the thought that he had now some opportunity of doing good, by detecting and dragging into light these common enemies of mankind; since, to invalidate this universal slander, it sufficed to show what contemptible men were the authors of it. He was not without hopes, that, by manifesting the dulness of those who had only malice to recommend them, either the booksellers would not find their account in employing them, or the men themselves, when discovered, want courage to proceed in so unlawful an occupation. This it was that gave birth to the 'Dunciad'; and he thought it an happiness, that, by the late flood of slander on himself, he had acquired such a peculiar right over their names as was necessary to this design.

"On the 12th of March, 1729, at St. James's, that poem was presented to the king and queen (who had before been pleased to read it) by the right honourable Sir Robert Walpole; and, some days after, the whole impression was taken and dispersed by several noblemen and persons of the first distinction.

"It is certainly a true observation, that no people are so impatient of censure as those who are the greatest slanderers, which was wonderfully exemplified on this occasion. On the day the book was first vended, a crowd of authors besieged the shop; entreaties, advices, threats of law and battery, — nay, cries of treason, were all employed to hinder the coming out of the 'Dunciad.' On the other side, the booksellers and

hawkers made as great efforts to procure it. What could a few poor authors do against so great a majority as the public? There was no stopping a torrent with a finger; so out it came.

“Many ludicrous circumstances attended it. The ‘Dunces’ (for by this name they were called) held weekly clubs, to consult of hostilities against the author: one wrote a letter to a great minister, assuring him Mr. Pope was the greatest enemy the government had; and another bought his image in clay, to execute him in effigy; with which sad sort of satisfaction the gentlemen were a little comforted. Some false editions of the book having an owl in their frontispiece, the true one, to distinguish it, fixed in his stead an ass laden with authors. Then another surreptitious one being printed with the same ass, the new edition in octavo returned for distinction to the owl again. Hence arose a great contest of booksellers against booksellers, and advertisements against advertisements; some recommending the edition of the owl, and others the edition of the ass; by which names they came to be distinguished, to the great honour also of the gentlemen of the ‘Dunciad.’”

Pope appears by this narrative to have contemplated his victory over the “Dunces” with great exultation; and such was his delight in the tumult which he had raised, that for a while his natural sensibility was suspended, and he read reproaches and invectives without emotion, considering them only as the necessary effects of that pain which he rejoiced in having given. It cannot however be concealed that, by his own confession, he was the aggressor: for nobody believes that the letters in the “Bathos” were placed at random; and it may be discovered that, when he thinks himself concealed, he indulges the common vanity of common men, and triumphs in those distinctions which he affected to despise. He is proud that his book was presented to the king and queen by the right honourable Sir Robert Walpole; he is proud that they had read it before; he is proud that the edition was taken off by the nobility and persons of the first distinction. The edition of which he speaks was, I believe, that which, by telling in the text the names, and in the notes the characters of those whom he had satirized, was made intelligible and diverting. The critics had now declared their approbation of the plan, and the common reader began to like it without fear; those who were strangers to petty literature, and therefore unable to decipher initials and blanks, had now names and persons brought within their view; and delighted in the visible effects of those shafts of malice, which they had hitherto contemplated as shot into the air.

Dennis, upon the fresh provocation now given him, renewed the enmity which had for a time been appeased by mutual civilities; and published remarks, which he had till then suppressed, upon the “Rape of the Lock.” Many more grumbled in secret, or vented their resentment in the newspapers by epigrams or invectives. Duckett, indeed, being mentioned as loving Burnet with “pious passion,” pretended that his moral character

was injured, and for some time declared his resolution to take vengeance with a cudgel. But Pope appeased him, by changing "pious passion" to "cordial friendship"; and by a note, in which he vehemently disclaims the malignity of the meaning imputed to the first expression. Aaron Hill, who was represented as diving for the prize, expostulated with Pope in a manner so much superior to all mean solicitation, that Pope was reduced to sneak and shuffle, sometimes to deny, and sometimes to apologize; he first endeavours to wound, and is then afraid to own that he meant a blow.

The "Dunciad," in the complete edition, is addressed to Dr. Swift: of the notes, part were written by Dr. Arbuthnot; and an apologetical letter was prefixed, signed by Cleland, but supposed to have been written by Pope.

After this general war upon Dulness, he seems to have indulged himself awhile in tranquillity; but his subsequent productions prove that he was not idle. He published (1731) a poem on "Taste," in which he very particularly and severely criticizes the house, the furniture, the gardens, and the entertainments of Timon, a man of great wealth and little taste. By Timon he was universally supposed, and by the Earl of Burlington, to whom the poem is addressed, was privately said, to mean the Duke of Chandos; a man perhaps too much delighted with pomp and show, but of a temper kind and beneficent, and who had consequently the voice of the public in his favour. A violent outcry was therefore raised against the ingratitude and treachery of Pope, who was said to have been indebted to the patronage of Chandos for a present of a thousand pounds, and who gained the opportunity of insulting him by the kindness of his invitation. The receipt of the thousand pounds Pope publicly denied; but, from the reproach which the attack on a character so amiable brought upon him, he tried all means of escaping. The name of Cleland was again employed in an apology, by which no man was satisfied; and he was at last reduced to shelter his temerity behind dissimulation, and endeavour to make that disbelieved which he never had confidence openly to deny. He wrote an explanatory letter to the duke, which was answered with great magnanimity, as by a man who accepted his excuse without believing his professions. He said, that to have ridiculed his taste, or his buildings, had been an indifferent action in another man; but that in Pope, after the reciprocal kindness that had been exchanged between them, it had been less easily excused.

Pope, in one of his Letters, complaining of the treatment which his poem had found, "owns that such critics can intimidate him, may almost persuade him to write no more, which is a compliment this age deserves." The man who threatens the world is always ridiculous; for the world can easily go on without him, and in a short time will cease to miss him. I have heard of an idiot, who used to revenge his vexations by lying all night upon the bridge. "There is nothing," says Juvenal, "that a man will

not believe in his own favour." Pope had been flattered till he thought himself one of the moving powers in the system of life. When he talked of laying down his pen, those who sat round him entreated and implored; and self-love did not suffer him to suspect that they went away and laughed.

The following year deprived him of Gay, a man whom he had known early, and whom he seemed to love with more tenderness than any other of his literary friends. Pope was now forty-four years old; an age at which the mind begins less easily to admit new confidence; and the will to grow less flexible; and when, therefore, the departure of an old friend is very acutely felt. In the next year (1733) he lost his mother, not by an unexpected death, for she had lasted to the age of ninety-three: but she did not die unlamented. The filial piety of Pope was in the highest degree amiable and exemplary; his parents had the happiness of living till he was at the summit of poetical reputation, till he was at ease in his fortune, and without a rival in his fame, and found no diminution of his respect or tenderness. Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever was his irritability, to them he was gentle. Life has, among its soothing and quiet comforts, few things better to give than such a son.

One of the passages of Pope's life, which seems to deserve some inquiry, was a publication of Letters between him and many of his friends, which falling into the hands of Curll, a rapacious bookseller, of no good fame, were by him printed and sold. This volume containing some letters from noblemen, Pope incited a prosecution against him in the House of Lords for breach of privilege, and attended himself to stimulate the resentment of his friends. Curll appeared at the bar, and, knowing himself in no great danger, spoke of Pope with very little reverence: "he has," said Curll, "a knack of versifying, but in prose I think myself a match for him." When the orders of the House were examined, none of them appeared to have been infringed: Curll went away triumphant; and Pope was left to seek some other remedy.

Curll's account was, that one evening a man in a clergyman's gown, but with a lawyer's band, brought and offered for sale a number of printed volumes, which he found to be Pope's epistolary correspondence; that he asked no name, and was told none, but gave the price demanded, and thought himself authorized to use his purchase to his own advantage. That Curll gave a true account of the transaction, it is reasonable to believe, because no falsehood was ever detected; and when, some years afterwards, I mentioned it to Lintot, the son of Bernard, he declared his opinion to be, that Pope knew better than anybody else how Curll obtained the copies, because another parcel was at the same time sent to himself, for which no price had ever been demanded, as he made known his resolution not to pay a porter, and consequently not to deal with a nameless agent. Such care had been taken to make them public, that they were sent at

once to two booksellers; to Curll, who was likely to seize them as a prey; and to Lintot, who might be expected to give Pope information of the seeming injury. Lintot, I believe, did nothing; and Curll did what was expected. That to make them public was the only purpose, may be reasonably supposed, because the numbers, offered to sale by the private messengers, showed that the hope of gain could not have been the motive of the impression. It seems that Pope, being desirous of printing his Letters, and not knowing how to do, without imputation of vanity, what has in this country been done very rarely, contrived an appearance of compulsion; that, when he could complain that his Letters were surreptitiously published, he might decently and defensively publish them himself.

Pope's private correspondence, thus promulgated, filled the nation with praises of his candour, tenderness, and benevolence, the purity of his purposes and the fidelity of his friendship. There were some letters which a very good or a wise man would wish suppressed; but, as they had been already exposed, it was impracticable now to retract them. From the perusal of those letters, Mr. Allen first conceived the desire of knowing him; and with so much zeal did he cultivate the friendship which he had newly formed, that, when Pope told his purpose of vindicating his own property by a genuine edition, he offered to pay the cost. This, however, Pope did not accept; but in time solicited a subscription for a quarto volume, which appeared (1737), I believe, with sufficient profit. In the preface he tells that his letters were repositied in a friend's library, said to be the Earl of Oxford's, and that the copy thence stolen was sent to the press. The story was doubtless received with different degrees of credit. It may be suspected that the preface to the Miscellanies was written to prepare the public for such an incident; and, to strengthen this opinion, James Worsdale, a painter, who was employed in clandestine negotiations, but whose veracity was very doubtful, declared that he was the messenger who carried, by Pope's direction, the books to Curll. When they were thus published and avowed, as they had relation to recent facts, and persons either then living or not yet forgotten, they may be supposed to have found readers; but, as the facts were minute, and the characters being either private or literary, were little known, or little regarded, they awaked no popular kindness or resentment; the book never became much the subject of conversation; some read it as a contemporary history, and some perhaps as a model of epistolary language; but those who read it did not talk of it. Not much therefore was added by it to fame or envy; nor do I remember that it produced either public praise or public censure. It had, however, in some degree, the recommendation of novelty. Our language had few letters, except those of statesmen. Howel, indeed, about a century ago, published his Letters, which are commended by Morhoff, and which alone, of his hundred volumes, continue his memory. Loveday's Letters were printed only once; those of Herbert and Suck-

ling are hardly known. Mrs. Phillips's (Orinda's) are equally neglected. And those of Walsh seem written as exercises, and were never sent to any living mistress or friend. Pope's epistolary excellence had an open field; he had no English rival, living or dead.

Pope is seen in this collection as connected with the other contemporary wits, and certainly suffers no disgrace in the comparison; but it must be remembered, that he had the power of favouring himself; he might have originally had publication in his mind, and have written with care, or have afterwards selected those which he had most happily conceived, or most diligently laboured; and I know not whether there does not appear something more studied and artificial in his productions than the rest, except one long letter by Bolingbroke, composed with all the skill and industry of a professed author. It is indeed not easy to distinguish affectation from habit; he that has once studiously formed a style, rarely writes afterwards with complete ease. Pope may be said to write always with his reputation in his head; Swift, perhaps, like a man that remembered he was writing to Pope; but Arbuthnot, like one who lets thoughts drop from his pen as they rise into his mind. Before these Letters appeared, he published the first part of what he persuaded himself to think a system of Ethics, under the title of an "Essay on Man"; which, if his letter to Swift (of September 14, 1725) be rightly explained by the commentator, had been eight years under his consideration, and of which he seems to have desired the success with great solicitude. He had now many open, and doubtless many secret enemies. The "Dunces" were yet smarting from the war; and the superiority which he publicly arrogated, disposed the world to wish his humiliation. All this he knew, and against all this he provided. His own name, and that of his friend to whom the work is inscribed, were in the first editions carefully suppressed; and the poem being of a new kind, was ascribed to one or another, as favour determined, or conjecture wandered; it was given, says Warburton, to every man, except him only who could write it. Those who like only when they like the author, and who are under the dominion of a name, condemned it; and those admired it who are willing to scatter praise at random, which, while it is unappropriated, excites no envy. Those friends of Pope that were trusted with the secret, went about lavishing honours on the new-born poet, and hinting that Pope was never so much in danger from any former rival. To those authors whom he had personally offended, and to those whose opinion the world considered as decisive, and whom he suspected of envy or malevolence, he sent his Essay as a present before publication, that they might defeat their own enmity by praises which they could not afterwards decently retract. With these precautions, in 1733, was published the first part of the "Essay on Man." There had been for some time a report that Pope was busy upon a System of Morality; but this design was not discovered in the new poem, which had a form and a

title with which its readers were unacquainted. Its reception was not uniform; some thought it a very imperfect piece, though not without good lines. While the author was unknown, some, as will always happen, favoured him as an adventurer, and some censured him as an intruder; but all thought him above neglect; the sale increased, and editions were multiplied. The subsequent editions of the first epistle exhibited two memorable corrections. At first, the poet and his friend

*Expatriate freely o'er this scene of man,
A mighty maze of walks without a plan;*

for which he wrote afterwards,

A mighty maze, but not without a plan;

for if there was no plan, it was in vain to describe or to trace the maze.

The other alteration was of these lines:

*And spite of pride, and in thy reason's spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right:*

but having afterwards discovered, or been shown, that the "truth" which subsisted "in spite of reason" could not be very "clear," he substituted

And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite.

To such oversights will the most vigorous mind be liable, when it is employed at once upon argument and poetry.

The second and third epistles were published, and Pope was, I believe, more and more suspected of writing them: at last, in 1734, he avowed the fourth, and claimed the honour of a moral poet. In the conclusion it is sufficiently acknowledged, that the doctrine of the "Essay on Man" was received from Bolingbroke, who is said to have ridiculed Pope, among those who enjoyed his confidence, as having adopted and advanced principles of which he did not perceive the consequence, and as blindly propagating opinions contrary to his own. That those communications had been consolidated into a scheme regularly drawn, and delivered to Pope, from whom it returned only transformed from prose to verse, has been reported: but hardly can be true. The essay plainly appears the fabric of a poet: what Bolingbroke supplied could be only the first principles; the order, illustration, and embellishments, must all be Pope's. These principles it is not my business to clear from obscurity, dogmatism, or falsehood; but they were not immediately examined; philosophy and poetry have not often the same readers; and the essay abounded in splendid amplifications and sparkling sentences, which were read and admired with no great attention to their ultimate purpose; its flowers caught the eye, which did not see what the gay foliage concealed, and for a time flourished

in the sunshine of universal approbation. So little was any evil tendency discovered, that, as innocence is unsuspicious, many read it for a manual of piety. Its reputation soon invited a translator. It was first turned into French prose, and afterwards by Resnel into verse. Both translations fell into the hands of Crousaz, who first, when he had the version in prose, wrote a general censure, and afterwards reprinted Resnel's version, with particular remarks upon every paragraph.

Crousaz was a professor of Switzerland, eminent for his treatise of logic, and his "Examen de Pyrrhonisme"; and, however little known or regarded here, was no mean antagonist. His mind was one of those in which philosophy and piety are happily united. He was accustomed to argument and disquisition, and perhaps was grown too desirous of detecting faults; but his intentions were always right, his opinions were solid, and his religion pure. His incessant vigilance for the promotion of piety disposed him to look with distrust upon all metaphysical systems of theology, and all schemes of virtue and happiness purely rational; and therefore it was not long before he was persuaded that the positions of Pope, as they terminated for the most part in natural religion, were intended to draw mankind away from revelation, and to represent the whole course of things as a necessary concatenation of indissoluble fatality; and it is undeniable, that in many passages a religious eye may easily discover expressions not very favourable to morals, or to liberty.

About this time Warburton began to make his appearance in the first ranks of learning. He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited inquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppressed his imagination, nor clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught, together with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his pursuits were too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him a haughty confidence, which he disdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with such contemptuous superiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited against the advocate the wishes of some who favoured the cause. He seems to have adopted the Roman Emperor's determination, *oderint dum metuant*; he used no allurements of gentle language, but wished to compel rather than persuade. His style is copious without selection, and forcible without neatness; he took the words that presented themselves; his diction is coarse and impure, and his sentences are unmeasured. He had, in the early part of his life, pleased himself with the notice of inferior wits, and corresponded with the enemies of Pope. A letter was produced, when he had perhaps himself forgotten it, in which he tells Concanen, "Dryden, I observe, borrows for want of leisure, and Pope for want of genius; Milton

out of pride, and Addison out of modesty." And when Theobald published Shakespeare, in opposition to Pope, the best notes were supplied by Warburton. But the time was now come when Warburton was to change his opinion; and Pope was to find a defender in him who had contributed so much to the exaltation of his rival.

The arrogance of Warburton excited against him every artifice of offence, and therefore it may be supposed that his union with Pope was censured as hypocritical inconstancy; but surely to think differently at different times of poetical merit may be easily allowed. Such opinions are often admitted, and dismissed, without nice examination. Who is there that has not found reason for changing his mind about questions of greater importance?

Warburton, whatever was his motive, undertook, without solicitation, to rescue Pope from the talons of Crousaz, by freeing him from the imputation of favouring fatality, or rejecting revelation; and from month to month continued a vindication of the "Essay on Man," in the literary journal of that time called the "Republic of Letters."

Pope, who probably began to doubt the tendency of his own work, was glad that the positions, of which he perceived himself not to know the full meaning, could by any mode of interpretation be made to mean well. How much he was pleased with his gratuitous defender, the following letter evidently shows:

"April 11, 1739.

"SIR, — I have just received from Mr. R. two more of your Letters. It is in the greatest hurry imaginable that I write this; but I cannot help thanking you in particular for your third Letter, which is so extremely clear, short, and full, that I think Mr. Crousaz ought never to have another answer, and deserved not so good an one. I can only say, you do him too much honour, and me too much right, so odd as the expression seems; for you have made my system as clear as I ought to have done, and could not. It is indeed the same system as mine, but illustrated with a ray of your own, as they say our natural body is the same still when it is glorified. I am sure I like it better than I did before, and so will every man else. I know I mean just what you explain; but I did not explain my own meaning so well as you. You understand me as well as I do myself; but you express me better than I could myself. Pray accept the sincerest acknowledgments. I cannot but wish these Letters were put together in one book, and intend (with your leave) to procure a translation of part at least, or of all of them, into French; but I shall not proceed a step without your consent and opinion," etc.

By this fond and eager acceptance of an exculpatory comment, Pope testified that, whatever might be the seeming or real import of the principles which he had received from Bolingbroke, he had not intentionally

attacked religion; and Bolingbroke, if he meant to make him, without his own consent, an instrument of mischief, found him now engaged, with his eyes open, on the side of truth. It is known that Bolingbroke concealed from Pope his real opinions. He once discovered them to Mr. Hooke, who related them again to Pope, and was told by him that he must have mistaken the meaning of what he heard; and Bolingbroke, when Pope's uneasiness incited him to desire an explanation, declared that Hooke had misunderstood him.

Bolingbroke hated Warburton, who had drawn his pupil from him; and a little before Pope's death they had a dispute, from which they parted with mutual aversion. From this time Pope lived in the closest intimacy with his commentator, and amply rewarded his kindness and his zeal; for he introduced him to Mr. Murray, by whose interest he became preacher at Lincoln's Inn; and to Mr. Allen, who gave him his niece and his estate, and by consequence a bishopric. When he died, he left him the property of his works; a legacy which may be reasonably estimated at four thousand pounds.

Pope's fondness for the "Essay on Man" appeared by his desire of its propagation. Dobson, who had gained reputation by his version of Prior's "Solomon," was employed by him to translate it into Latin verse, and was for that purpose some time at Twickenham; but he left his work, whatever was the reason, unfinished; and, by Benson's invitation, undertook the longer task of "Paradise Lost." Pope then desired his friend to find a scholar who should turn his Essay into Latin prose; but no such performance has ever appeared.

Pope lived at this time *among the Great*, with that reception and respect to which his works entitled him, and which he had not impaired by any private misconduct or factious partiality. Though Bolingbroke was his friend, Walpole was not his enemy; but treated him with so much consideration as, at his request, to solicit and obtain from the French Minister an abbey for Mr. Southcot, whom he considered himself as obliged to reward, by his exertion of his interest, for the benefit which he had received from his attendance in a long illness. It was said, that when the Court was at Richmond, Queen Caroline had declared her intention to visit him. This may have been only a careless effusion, thought on no more: the report of such notice, however, was soon in many mouths; and, if I do not forget or misapprehend Savage's account, Pope, pretending to decline what was not yet offered, left his house for a time, not, I suppose, for any other reason than lest he should be thought to stay at home in expectation of an honour which would not be conferred. He was therefore angry at Swift, who represents him as "refusing the visits of a Queen," because he knew that what had never been offered had never been refused.

Beside the general system of morality, supposed to be contained in the "Essay on Man," it was his intention to write distinct poems upon the

different duties or conditions of life; one of which is the Epistle to Lord Bathurst (1733) on the "Use of Riches," a piece on which he declared great labour to have been bestowed. Into this poem some hints are historically thrown, and some known characters are introduced, with others of which it is difficult to say how far they are real or fictitious; but the praise of Kyrle, the Man of Ross, deserves particular examination, who, after a long and pompous enumeration of his public works and private charities, is said to have diffused all those blessings from five hundred a year. Wonders are willingly told, and willingly heard. The truth is, that Kyrle was a man of known integrity and active benevolence, by whose solicitation the wealthy were persuaded to pay contributions to his charitable schemes; this influence he obtained by an example of liberality exerted to the utmost extent of his power, and was thus enabled to give more than he had. This account Mr. Victor received from the minister of the place; and I have preserved it, that the praise of a good man, being made more credible, may be more solid. Narrations of romantic and impracticable virtue will be read with wonder, but that which is unattainable is recommended in vain; that good may be endeavoured, it must be shown to be possible. This is the only piece in which the author has given a hint of his religion, by ridiculing the ceremony of burning the pope, and by mentioning with some indignation the inscription on the Monument.

When this poem was first published, the dialogue, having no letters of direction, was perplexed and obscure. Pope seems to have written with no very distinct idea; for he calls that an "Epistle to Bathurst," in which Bathurst is introduced as speaking. He afterwards (1734) inscribed to Lord Cobham his "Characters of Men," written with close attention to the operations of the mind and modifications of life. In this poem he has endeavoured to establish and exemplify his favourite theory of the *ruling passion*, by which he means an original direction of desire to some particular object, an innate affection which gives all action a determinate and invariable tendency, and operates upon the whole system of life, either openly, or more secretly by the intervention of some accidental or subordinate propension. Of any passion, thus innate and irresistible, the existence may reasonably be doubted. Human characters are by no means constant; men change by change of place, of fortune, of acquaintance; he who is at one time a lover of pleasure, is at another a lover of money. Those indeed who attain any excellence, commonly spend life in one pursuit; for excellence is not often gained upon easier terms. But to the particular species of excellence men are directed, not by an ascendant planet or predominating humour, but by the first book which they read, some early conversation which they heard, or some accident which excited ardour and emulation. It must at least be allowed, that this ruling passion, antecedent to reason and observation, must have an object independent on human contrivance; for there can be no natural desire of artificial good.

No man therefore can be born, in the strict acceptation, a lover of money; for he may be born where money does not exist: nor can he be born, in a moral sense, a lover of his country; for society, politically regulated, is a state contradistinguished from a state of nature; and any attention to that coalition of interests which makes the happiness of a country, is possible only to those whom inquiry and reflection have enabled to comprehend it. This doctrine is in itself pernicious as well as false: its tendency is to produce the belief of a kind of moral predestination, or overruling principle which cannot be resisted; he that admits it is prepared to comply with every desire that caprice or opportunity shall excite, and to flatter himself that he submits only to the lawful dominion of nature, in obeying the resistless authority of his ruling passion.

Pope has formed his theory with so little skill, that, in the examples by which he illustrates and confirms it, he has confounded passions, appetites, and habits. To the "Characters of Men," he added soon after, in an epistle supposed to have been addressed to Martha Blount, but which the last edition has taken from her, the "Characters of Women." This poem, which was laboured with great diligence, and in the author's opinion with great success, was neglected at its first publication, as the commentator supposes, because the public was informed, by an advertisement, that it contained no character drawn from the life; an assertion which Pope probably did not expect nor wish to have been believed, and which he soon gave his readers sufficient reason to distrust by telling them in a note that the work was imperfect, because part of his subject was Vice too high to be yet exposed. The time, however, soon came in which it was safe to display the Duchess of Marlborough under the name of Atossa; and her character was inserted, with no great honour to the writer's gratitude.

He published from time to time (between 1730 and 1740) Imitations of different poems of Horace, generally with his name, and once, as was suspected, without it. What he was upon moral principles ashamed to own, he ought to have suppressed. Of these pieces it is useless to settle the dates, as they had seldom much relation to the times, and perhaps had been long in his hands. This mode of imitation, in which the ancients are familiarized, by adapting their sentiments to modern topics, by making Horace say of Shakespeare what he originally said of Ennius, and accommodating his satires on Pantolabus and Nomentanus to the flatterers and prodigals of our own time, was first practised in the reign of Charles the Second, by Oldham and Rochester, at least I remember no instances more ancient. It is a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable, and the parallels lucky. It seems to have been Pope's favourite amusement; for he has carried it farther than any former poet. He published likewise a revival, in smoother numbers, of Dr. Donne's Satires,

which was recommended to him by the Duke of Shrewsbury and the Earl of Oxford. They made no great impression on the public. Pope seems to have known their imbecility, and therefore suppressed them while he was yet contending to rise in reputation, but ventured them when he thought their deficiencies more likely to be imputed to Donne than to himself.

The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, which seems to be derived in its first design from Boileau's Address *à son Esprit*, was published in January, 1735, about a month before the death of him to whom it is inscribed. It is to be regretted, that either honour or pleasure should have been missed by Arbuthnot; a man estimable for his learning, amiable for his life, and venerable for his piety. Arbuthnot was a man of great comprehension, skilful in his profession, versed in the sciences, acquainted with ancient literature, and able to animate his mass of knowledge by a bright and active imagination; a scholar with great brilliance of wit; a wit, who in the crowd of life, retained and discovered a noble ardour of religious zeal. In this poem Pope seems to reckon with the public. He vindicates himself from censures; and with dignity, rather than arrogance, enforces his own claims to kindness and respect. Into this poem are interwoven several paragraphs which had been before printed as a fragment, and among them the satirical lines upon Addison, of which the last couplet has been twice corrected. It was at first,

*Who would not smile if such a man there be?
Who would not laugh if Addison were he!*

Then,

*Who would not grieve if such a man there be?
Who would not laugh if Addison were he?*

At last it is,

*Who but must laugh if such a man there be?
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?*

He was at this time at open war with Lord Hervey, who had distinguished himself as a steady adherent to the ministry; and, being offended with a contemptuous answer to one of his pamphlets, had summoned Pulteney to a duel. Whether he or Pope made the first attack, perhaps cannot now be easily known: he had written an invective against Pope, whom he calls "Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure"; and hints that his father was a hatter. To this Pope wrote a reply in verse and prose; the verses are in this poem; and the prose, though it was never sent, is printed among his letters; but to a cool reader of the present time exhibits nothing but tedious malignity.

His last Satires, of the general kind, were two Dialogues, named, from the year in which they were published, "Seventeen hundred and thirty-eight." In these poems many are praised and many reproached. Pope was then entangled in the opposition; a follower of the Prince of Wales, who dined at his house, and the friend of many who obstructed and censured the conduct of the ministers. His political partiality was too plainly shown: he forgot the prudence with which he passed, in his earlier years, uninjured and unoffending, through much more violent conflicts of faction. In the first Dialogue, having an opportunity of praising Allen of Bath, he asked his leave to mention him as a man not illustrious by any merit of his ancestors, and called him in his verses "low-born Allen." Men are seldom satisfied with praise introduced or followed by any mention of defect. Allen seems not to have taken any pleasure in his epithet, which was afterwards softened into "humble Allen." In the second Dialogue he took some liberty with one of the Foxes, among others; which Fox, in a reply to Lyttelton, took an opportunity of repaying, by reproaching him with the friendship of a lampooner, who scattered his ink without fear or decency, and against whom he hoped the resentment of the Legislature would quickly be discharged.

About this time Paul Whitehead, a small poet, was summoned before the Lords for a poem called "Manners," together with Dodsley his publisher. Whitehead, who hung loose upon society, skulked and escaped; but Dodsley's shop and family made his appearance necessary. He was, however, soon dismissed; and the whole process was probably intended rather to intimidate Pope, than to punish Whitehead.

Pope never afterwards attempted to join the patriot with the poet, nor drew his pen upon statesmen. That he desisted from his attempts of reformation is imputed, by his commentator, to his despair of prevailing over the corruption of the time. He was not likely to have been ever of opinion, that the dread of his satire would countervail the love of power or of money; he pleased himself with being important and formidable, and gratified sometimes his pride, and sometimes his resentment; till at last he began to think he should be more safe, if he were less busy.

The "Memoirs of Scriblerus," published about this time, extend only to the first book of a work projected in concert by Pope, Swift and Arbuthnot, who used to meet in the time of Queen Anne, and denominated themselves the "Scriblerus Club." Their purpose was to censure the abuses of learning by a fictitious life of an infatuated Scholar. They were dispersed; the design was never completed; and Warburton laments its miscarriage, as an event very disastrous to polite letters. If the whole may be estimated by this specimen, which seems to be the production of Arbuthnot, with a few touches perhaps by Pope, the want of more will not be much lamented; for the follies which the writer ridicules are so little practised, that they are not known; nor can the satire be understood but by the

learned: he raises phantoms of absurdity, and then drives them away. He cures diseases that were never felt. For this reason this joint production of three great writers has never obtained any notice from mankind; it has been little read, or when read has been forgotten, as no man could be wiser, better, or merrier, by remembering it. The design cannot boast of much originality; for, besides its general resemblance to Don Quixote, there will be found in it particular imitations of the History of Mr. Ouffle.

Swift carried so much of it into Ireland as supplied him with hints for his Travels; and with those the world might have been contented, though the rest had been suppressed.

Pope had sought for images and sentiments in a region not known to have been explored by many other of the English writers; he had consulted the modern writers of Latin poetry, a class of authors whom Boileau endeavoured to bring into contempt, and who are too generally neglected. Pope, however, was not ashamed of their acquaintance, nor ungrateful for the advantages which he might have derived from it. A small selection from the Italians, who wrote in Latin, had been published at London, about the latter end of the last century, by a man who concealed his name, but whom his Preface shows to have been qualified for his undertaking. This collection Pope amplified by more than half, and (1740) published it in two volumes, but injuriously omitted his predecessor's preface. To these books, which had nothing but the mere text, no regard was paid, the authors were still neglected, and the editor was neither praised nor censured. He did not sink into idleness; he had planned a work, which he considered as subsequent to his "Essay on Man," of which he has given this account to Dr. Swift.

" March 25, 1736.

" If ever I write any more Epistles in verse, one of them shall be addressed to you. I have long concerted it, and begun it; but I would make what bears your name as finished as my last work ought to be, that is to say, more finished than any of the rest. The subject is large, and will divide into four Epistles, which naturally follow the 'Essay on Man'; viz. 1. Of the Extent and Limits of Human Reason and Science. 2. A view of the useful and therefore attainable, and of the unuseful and therefore unattainable Arts. 3. Of the Nature, Ends, Application, and Use, of different Capacities. 4. Of the Use of Learning, of the Science, of the World, and of Wit. It will conclude with a satire against the misapplication of all these, exemplified by Pictures, Characters, and Examples."

This work in its full extent, being now afflicted with an asthma, and finding the powers of life gradually declining, he had no longer courage to undertake; but, from the materials which he had provided, he added, at Warburton's request, another book to the "Dunciad," of which the design is to ridicule such studies as are either hopeless or useless, as either pursue

what is unattainable, or what, if it be attained, is of no use. When this book was printed (1742) the laurel had been for some time upon the head of Cibber; a man whom it cannot be supposed that Pope could regard with much kindness or esteem, though in one of the imitations of Horace he has liberally enough praised the "Careless Husband." In the "Dunciad," among other worthless scribblers, he had mentioned Cibber: who, in his "Apology," complains of the great Poet's unkindness as more injurious, "because," says he, "I never have offended him."

It might have been expected that Pope should have been, in some degree mollified by this submissive gentleness, but no such consequence appeared. Though he condescended to commend Cibber once, he mentioned him afterwards contemptuously in one of his satires, and again in his Epistle to Arbuthnot; and in the fourth book of the "Dunciad" attacked him with acrimony, to which the provocation is not easily discoverable. Perhaps he imagined that, in ridiculing the Laureat, he satirized those by whom the laurel had been given, and gratified that ambitious petulance with which he affected to insult the great. The severity of this satire left Cibber no longer any patience. He had confidence enough in his own powers to believe that he could disturb the quiet of his adversary, and doubtless did not want instigators, who, without any care about the victory, desired to amuse themselves by looking on the contest. He therefore gave the town a pamphlet, in which he declares his resolution from that time never to bear another blow without returning it, and to tire out his adversary by perseverance, if he cannot conquer him by strength.

The incessant and unappeasable malignity of Pope he imputes to a very distant cause. After the "Three Hours after Marriage" had been driven off the stage, by the offence which the mummy and crocodile gave the audience, while the exploded scene was yet fresh in memory, it happened that Cibber played Bayes in the Rehearsal; and, as it had been usual to enliven the part by the mention of any recent theatrical transactions, he said, that he once thought to have introduced his lovers disguised in a mummy and a crocodile. "This," says he, "was received with loud claps, which indicated contempt for the play." Pope, who was behind the scenes, meeting him as he left the stage, attacked him, as he says, with all the virulence of a "Wit out of his senses"; to which he replied, "that he would take no other notice of what was said by so particular a man, than to declare, that, as often as he played that part, he would repeat the same provocation." He shows his opinion to be, that Pope was one of the authors of the play which he so zealously defended; and adds an idle story of Pope's behaviour at a tavern.

The pamphlet was written with little power of thought or language, and, if suffered to remain without notice, would have been very soon forgotten. Pope had now been enough acquainted with human life to know,

if his passion had not been too powerful for his understanding, that, from a contention like his with Cibber, the world seeks nothing but diversion, which is given at the expense of the higher character. When Cibber lampooned Pope, curiosity was excited; what Pope would say of Cibber nobody inquired, but in hope that Pope's asperity might betray his pain and lessen his dignity. He should therefore have suffered the pamphlet to flutter and die, without confessing that it stung him. The dishonour of being shown as Cibber's antagonist could never be compensated by the victory. Cibber had nothing to lose; when Pope had exhausted all his malignity upon him, he would rise in the esteem both of his friends and his enemies. Silence only could have made him despicable; the blow which did not appear to be felt would have been struck in vain. But Pope's irascibility prevailed, and he resolved to tell the whole English world that he was at war with Cibber; and, to show that he thought him no common adversary, he prepared no common vengeance; he published a new edition of the "Dunciad," in which he degraded Theobald from his painful pre-eminence, and enthroned Cibber in his stead. Unhappily the two heroes were of opposite characters, and Pope was unwilling to lose what he had already written; he has therefore depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the old pedantry, and the sluggish pertinacity of Theobald.

Pope was ignorant enough of his own interest, to make another change, and introduced Osborne contending for a prize among the booksellers. Osborne was a man entirely destitute of shame, without sense of any disgrace but that of poverty. He told me, when he was doing that which raised Pope's resentment, that he should be put into the "Dunciad"; but he had the fate of Cassandra. I gave no credit to his prediction, till in time I saw it accomplished. The shafts of satire were directed equally in vain against Cibber and Osborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one, and deadened by the impassive dulness of the other. Pope confessed his own pain by his anger; but he gave no pain to those who had provoked him. He was able to hurt none but himself; by transferring the same ridicule from one to another, he reduced himself to the insignificance of his own magpie, who from his cage calls cuckold at a venture.

Cibber, according to his engagement, repaid the "Dunciad" with another pamphlet, which, Pope said, "would be as good as a dose of hartshorn to him"; but his tongue and his heart were at variance. I have heard Mr. Richardson relate that he attended his father the painter on a visit, when one of Cibber's pamphlets came into the hands of Pope, who said, "These things are my diversion." They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his features writhing with anguish: and young Richardson said to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope. From this time,

finding his diseases more oppressive, and his vital powers gradually declining, he no longer strained his faculties with any original composition, nor proposed any other employment for his remaining life than the revision and correction of his former works; in which he received advice and assistance from Warburton, whom he appears to have trusted and honoured in the highest degree. He laid aside his Epic Poem, perhaps without much loss to mankind; for his hero was Brutus the Trojan, who, according to a ridiculous fiction, established a colony in Britain. The subject therefore was of the fabulous age; the actors were a race upon whom imagination has been exhausted, and attention wearied, and to whom the mind will not easily be recalled, when it is invited in blank verse, which Pope had adopted with great imprudence, and, I think, without due consideration of the nature of our language. The sketch is, at least in part, preserved by Ruffhead; by which it appears that Pope was thoughtless enough to model the names of his heroes with terminations not consistent with the time or country in which he places them. He lingered through the next year; but perceived himself, as he expresses it, "going down the hill." He had for at least five years been afflicted with an asthma, and other disorders, which his physicians were unable to relieve. Towards the end of his life he consulted Dr. Thomson, a man who had, by large promises, and free censures of the common practice of physic, forced himself up into sudden reputation. Thomson declared his distemper to be a dropsy, and evacuated part of the water by tincture of jalap; but confessed that his belly did not subside. Thomson had many enemies, and Pope was persuaded to dismiss him.

While he was yet capable of amusement and conversation, as he was one day sitting in the air with Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont, he saw his favourite, Martha Blount, at the bottom of the terrace, and asked Lord Bolingbroke to go and hand her up. Bolingbroke, not liking his errand, crossed his legs and sat still; but Lord Marchmont, who was younger and less captious, waited on the lady, who, when he came to her, asked, "What, is he not dead yet?" She is said to have neglected him with shameful unkindness, in the latter time of his decay; yet, of the little which he had to leave she had a very great part. Their acquaintance began early; the life of each was pictured on the other's mind; their conversation therefore was endearing, for when they met, there was an immediate coalition of congenial notions. Perhaps he considered her unwillingness to approach the chamber of sickness as female weakness, or human frailty; perhaps he was conscious to himself of peevishness and impatience, or, though he was offended by her inattention, might yet consider her merit as overbalancing her fault; and, if he had suffered his heart to be alienated from her, he could have found nothing that might fill her place; he could have only shrunk within himself; it was too late to transfer his confidence or fondness.

In May, 1744, his death was approaching; on the 6th he was all day delirious which he mentioned four days afterwards as a sufficient humiliation of the vanity of man; he afterwards complained of seeing things as through a curtain, and in false colours, and one day, in the presence of Dodsley, asked what arm it was that came out from the wall. He said that his greatest inconvenience was inability to think. Bolingbroke sometimes wept over him in this state of helpless decay; and being told by Spence, that Pope, at the intermission of his deliriousness, was always saying something kind either of his present or absent friends, and that his humanity seemed to have survived his understanding, answered, "It has so." And added, "I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind." At another time he said, "I have known Pope these thirty years, and value myself more in his friendship than ——" His grief then suppressed his voice.

Pope expressed undoubting confidence of a future state. Being asked by his friend Mr. Hooke, a papist, whether he would not die like his father and mother, and whether a priest should not be called, he answered, "I do not think it essential, but it will be very right; and I thank you for putting me in mind of it." In the morning, after the priest had given him the last sacraments, he said, "There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship; and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue." He died in the evening of the thirtieth day of May, 1744, so placidly, that the attendants did not discern the exact time of his expiration. He was buried at Twickenham, near his father and mother, where a monument has been erected to him by his commentator, the Bishop of Gloucester.

He left the care of his papers to his executors; first to Lord Bolingbroke; and, if he should not be living, to the Earl of Marchmont; undoubtedly expecting them to be proud of the trust, and eager to extend his fame. But let no man dream of influence beyond his life. After a decent time, Dodsley the bookseller went to solicit preference as the publisher, and was told that the parcel had not been yet inspected; and, whatever was the reason, the world has been disappointed of what was "reserved for the next age." He lost, indeed, the favour of Bolingbroke by a kind of posthumous offence. The political pamphlet called "The Patriot King" had been put into his hands that he might procure the impression of a very few copies, to be distributed, according to the author's direction, among his friends, and Pope assured him that no more had been printed than were allowed; but, soon after his death, the printer brought and resigned a complete edition of fifteen hundred copies, which Pope had ordered him to print, and retain in secret. He kept, as was observed, his engagement to Pope better than Pope had kept it to his friend; and nothing was known of the transaction, till, upon the death of his em-

ployer, he thought himself obliged to deliver the books to the right owner, who, with great indignation, made a fire in his yard, and delivered the whole impression to the flames.

Hitherto nothing had been done which was not naturally dictated by resentment of violated faith; resentment more acrimonious, as the violator had been more loved or more trusted. But here the anger might have stopped; the injury was private, and there was little danger from the example. Bolingbroke, however, was not yet satisfied; his thirst of vengeance excited him to blast the memory of the man over whom he had wept in his last struggles; and he employed Mallet, another friend of Pope, to tell the tale to the public, with all its aggravations. Warburton, whose heart was warm with his legacy, and tender by the recent separation, thought it proper for him to interpose; and undertook, not indeed to vindicate the action, for breach of trust has always something criminal, but to extenuate it by an apology. Having advanced what cannot be denied, that moral obliquity is made more or less excusable by the motives that produce it, he inquires what evil purpose could have induced Pope to break his promise. He could not delight his vanity by usurping the work, which, though not sold in shops, had been shown to a number more than sufficient to preserve the author's claim; he could not gratify his avarice, for he could not sell his plunder till Bolingbroke was dead; and even then, if the copy was left to another, his fraud would be defeated, and if left to himself would be useless. Warburton therefore supposes, with great appearance of reason, that the irregularity of his conduct proceeded wholly from his zeal for Bolingbroke, who might perhaps have destroyed the pamphlet, which Pope thought it his duty to preserve, even without its author's approbation. To this apology an answer was written in "A letter to the most impudent man living." He brought some reproach upon his own memory by the petulant and contemptuous mention made in his will of Mr. Allen, and an affected repayment of his benefactions. Mrs. Blount, as the known friend and favourite of Pope, had been invited to the house of Allen, where she comported herself with such indecent arrogance, that she parted from Mrs. Allen in a state of irreconcilable dislike, and the door was for ever barred against her. This exclusion she resented with so much bitterness as to refuse any legacy from Pope, unless he left the world with a disavowal of obligation to Allen. Having been long under her dominion, now tottering in the decline of life, and unable to resist the violence of her temper, or perhaps, with the prejudice of a lover, persuaded that she had suffered improper treatment, he complied with her demand, and polluted his will with female resentment. Allen accepted the legacy, which he gave to the Hospital at Bath, observing that Pope was always a bad accountant, and that, if to 150*l.* he had put a cipher more, he had come nearer to the truth.

The person of Pope is well known not to have been formed by the

nicest model. He has, in his account of the "Little Club," compared himself to a spider, and by another is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution originally feeble and weak; and, as bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low, that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid. By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered, that his life was "a long disease." His most frequent assailant was the headache, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

Most of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was communicated by a female domestic of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps after the middle of life. He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible to cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in bodice made of stiff canvas, being scarcely able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pairs of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean. His hair had fallen almost all away; and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black, with a tie-wig, and a little sword. The indulgence and accommodation which his sickness required, had taught him all the unpleasing and unsocial qualities of a valetudinary man. He expected that everything should give way to his ease or humour as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery.

*C'est que l'enfant toujours est homme,
C'est que l'homme est toujours enfant.*

When he wanted to sleep he "nodded in company"; and once slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking poetry.

The reputation which his friendship gave procured him many invitations; but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant, and had so many wants, that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. Wherever he was, he left no room for another, because he exacted the attention, and employed the activity of the whole family. His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him; and the Earl of Oxford discharged some of his servants for their resolute refusal of his messages. The maids, when they had neg-

lected their business, alleged that they had been employed by Mr. Pope. One of his constant demands was of coffee in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very burthensome: but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep; and Lord Oxford's servant declared, that in the house where her business was to answer his call, she would not ask for wages. He had another fault, easily incident to those who, suffering much pain, think themselves entitled to what pleasures they can snatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite: he loved meat highly seasoned and of strong taste; and, at intervals of the table, amused himself with biscuits and dry conserves. If he sat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion; and though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew the avenues to his heart, pampered him with presents of luxury, which he did not suffer to stand neglected. The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. Hannibal, says Juvenal, did not perish by the javelin or the sword; the slaughters of Cannæ were revenged by a ring. The death of Pope was imputed, by some of his friends, to a silver saucepan, in which it was his delight to eat potted lampreys. That he loved too well to eat, is certain; but that his sensuality shortened his life will not be hastily concluded, when it is remembered that a conformation so irregular lasted six and fifty years, notwithstanding such pertinacious diligence or study and meditation. In all his intercourse with mankind, he had great delight in artifice, and endeavoured to attain all his purposes by indirect and unsuspected methods. "He hardly drank tea without a stratagem." If, at the house of friends, he wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to ask for it in plain terms, but would mention it remotely as something convenient; though, when it was procured, he soon made it appear for whose sake it had been recommended. Thus he teased Lord Orrey till he obtained a screen. He practised his arts on such small occasions, that Lady Bolingbroke used to say, in a French phrase, that "he played the politician about cabbages and turnips." His unjustifiable impression of the "Patriot King," as it can be attributed to no particular motive, must have proceeded from his general habit of secrecy and cunning; he caught an opportunity of a sly trick, and pleased himself with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke. In familiar or convivial conversation, it does not appear that he excelled. He may be said to have resembled Dryden, as being not one that was distinguished by vivacity in company. It is remarkable that, so near his time, so much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he has said: traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, nor sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, either wise or merry. One apophthegm only stands upon record. When an objection, raised against his inscription for Shakespeare, was defended by the authority of Patrick, he replied, *horresco referens*, that he "would allow the publisher of a

Dictionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together."

He was fretful and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be capriciously resentful. He would sometimes leave Lord Oxford silently, no one could tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and messages than the footmen were willing to carry. The table was indeed infested by Lady Mary Wortley, who was the friend of Lady Oxford, and who, knowing his peevishness, could by no entreaties be restrained from contradicting him, till their disputes were sharpened by such asperity, that one or the other quieted the house. He sometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiors; but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter.

Of his domestic character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependent, he determined not to be in want, and therefore wisely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expense unsuitable to his fortune. This general care must be universally approved; but it sometimes appeared in petty artifices of parsimony, such as the practice of writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be seen in the remaining copy of the "*Iliad*," by which perhaps in five years five shillings were saved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment, as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint upon the table; and having himself taken two small glasses, would retire, and say, "Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine." Yet he tells his friends, that "he has a heart for all, a house for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all." He sometimes, however, made a splendid dinner and is said to have wanted no part of the skill or elegance which such performances require. That this magnificence should be often displayed, that obstinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit; for his revenue, certain and casual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a year, of which, however, he declares himself able to assign one hundred to charity. Of this fortune, which, as it arose from public approbation, was very honourably obtained, his imagination seems to have been too full: it would be hard to find a man, so well entitled to notice by his wit, that ever delighted so much in talking of his money. In his Letters, and in his poems, his garden and his grotto, his quincunx and his vines, or some hints of his opulence, are always to be found. The great topic of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want everything. Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions, seems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices of meanness or servility; a boast which

was never denied to be true, and to which very few poets have ever aspired. Pope never set genius to sale; he never flattered those whom he did not love, nor praised those whom he did not esteem. Savage, however, remarked, that he began a little to relax his dignity when he wrote a distich for "his Highness's dog."

His admiration of the Great seems to have increased in the advance of life. He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his "*Iliad*" to Congreve, with a magnanimity of which the praise had been complete, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know; there is no trace in literary history of any particular intimacy between them. The name of Congreve appears in the Letters among those of his other friends, but without any observable distinction or consequence. To his latter works, however, he took care to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice; for, except Lord Bathurst, none of his noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity; he can derive little honour from the notice of Cobham, Burlington, or Bolingbroke.

Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his Letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence, and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not show to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known; and must therefore please, if not by favouring them,

by forbearing to oppose them. To charge those favorable representations, which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would show more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure, while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt; and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write, because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge; and another to solicit the imagination, because ceremony or vanity requires something to be written. Pope confesses his early letters to be vitiated with *affection and ambition*: to know whether he disentangled himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison. One of his favourite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed; and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when "he has just nothing else to do"; yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he "had always some poetical scheme in his head." It was punctually required that his writing box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestic related, that, in the dreadful winter of Forty she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought. He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his critics, and therefore hoped that he did despise them. As he happened to live in two reigns when the court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings, and proclaims that "he never sees courts." Yet a little regard shown him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, "How he could love a Prince while he disliked Kings?"

He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and represents himself as looking on mankind, sometimes with gay indifference, as on emmets of a hillock, below his serious attention; and sometimes with gloomy indignation, as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despise those whom he lived by pleasing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was superstructured? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease? Of things that terminate in human life, the world

is the proper judge: to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just; and if it were just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreasonable temper; he was sufficiently *a fool to fame*, and his fault was, that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his sullenness were only in his letters; he passed through common life, sometimes vexed, and sometimes pleased, with the natural emotions of common men. His scorn of the Great is repeated too often to be real; no man thinks much of that which he despises; and as falsehood is always in danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast at another time that he lives among them. It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing lest the clerks of the post office should know his secrets; he has many enemies; he considers himself as surrounded by universal jealousy: "after many deaths, and many dispersions, two or three of us," says he, "may still be brought together, not to plot, but to divert ourselves, and the world too, if it pleases;" and they can live together, and "show what friends wits may be, in spite of all the fools in the world." All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand; he certainly had no more enemies than a public character like his inevitably excites; and with what degree of friendship the wits might live, very few were so much fools as ever to inquire. Some part of this pretended discontent he learned from Swift, and expresses it, I think, most frequently in his correspondence with him. Swift's resentment was unreasonable, but it was sincere; Pope's was the mere mimicry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When he was only twenty-five years old, he related that "a glut of study and retirement had thrown him on the world," and there was danger lest "a glut of the world should throw him back upon study and retirement." To this Swift answered with great propriety, that Pope had not yet acted or suffered enough in the world to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it must have been some very powerful reason that can drive back to solitude him who has once enjoyed the pleasures of society.

In the Letters both of Swift and Pope there appears such narrowness of mind, as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of their age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference, he certainly does not express his habitual and settled resentments, but either wilfully disguises his own character, or, what is more likely, invests himself with temporary qualities, and sallies out in the colours of the present moment. His hopes and fears, his joys and

sorrows, acted strongly upon his mind; and, if he differed from others, it was not by carelessness; he was irritable and resentful; his malignity to Philips, whom he had first made ridiculous, and then hated for being angry, continued too long. Of his vain desire to make Bentley contemptible, I never heard any adequate reason. He was sometimes wanton in his attacks; and, before Chandos, Lady Wortley, and Hill, was mean in his retreat. The virtues which seem to have had most of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendship, in which it does not appear that he was other than he describes himself. His fortune did not suffer his character to be splendid and conspicuous; but he assisted Dodsley with a hundred pounds, that he might open a shop; and, of the subscription of forty pounds a year that he raised for Savage, twenty were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money; but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it. In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant; his early maturity of mind commonly united him with men older than himself; and therefore, without attaining any considerable length of life, he saw many companions of his youth sink into the grave; but it does not appear that he lost a single friend by coldness or by injury; those who loved him once, continued their kindness. His ungrateful mention of Allen in his will, was the effect of his adherence to one whom he had known much longer, and whom he naturally loved with greater fondness. His violation of the trust reposed in him by Bolingbroke could have no motive inconsistent with the warmest affection; he either thought the action so near to indifferent that he forgot it, or so laudable, that he expected his friend to approve it. It was reported, with such confidence as almost to enforce belief, that in the papers entrusted to his executors, was found a defamatory *Life of Swift*, which he had prepared as an instrument of vengeance, to be used if any provocation should be ever given. About this I inquired of the Earl of Marchmont, who assured me that no such piece was among his remains.

The religion in which he lived and died was that of the Church of Rome, to which, in his correspondence with Racine he professes himself a sincere adherent. That he was not scrupulously pious in some part of his life, is known by many many idle and indecent applications of sentences taken from the Scriptures; a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity. But to whatever levities he has been betrayed, it does not appear that his principles were ever corrupted, or that he ever lost his belief of revelation. The positions which he transmitted from Bolingbroke he seems not to have understood, and was pleased with an interpretation that made them orthodox.

A man of such exalted superiority, and so little moderation, would naturally have all his delinquencies observed and aggravated: those who could not deny that he was excellent, would rejoice to find that he was not

perfect. Perhaps it may be imputed to the unwillingness with which the same man is allowed to possess many advantages, that his learning has been depreciated. He certainly was, in his early life, a man of great literary curiosity; and, when he wrote his "Essay on Criticism," had, for his age, a very wide acquaintance with books. When he entered into the living world, it seems to have happened to him, as to many others, that he was less attentive to dead masters; he studied in the academy of Paracelsus, and made the universe his favourite volume. He gathered his notions fresh from reality, not from the copies of authors, but the originals of nature. Yet there is no reason to believe that literature ever lost his esteem; he always professed to love reading; and Dobson, who spent some time at his house translating his "Essay on Man," when I asked him what learning he found him to possess, answered, "More than I expected." His frequent references to history, his allusions to various kinds of knowledge, and his images selected from art and nature, with his observations on the operations of the mind and the modes of life, show an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excursive, vigorous, and diligent, eager to pursue knowledge, and attentive to retain it. From this curiosity arose the desire of travelling, to which he alludes in his verses to Jervas, and which, though he never found an opportunity to gratify it, did not leave him till his life declined.

Of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was good sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and what was to be copied. But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do. To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditations suggested, but what he had found in other writers that might be accommodated to his present purpose. These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life; and, however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last. From

his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered anything that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expression more happy than was common, rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion; and some little fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at some other time. He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure: he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.

Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation, and write their productions only when, in their own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his custom was to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies. The method of Pope, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them. With such faculties and such dispositions, he excelled every other writer in poetical prudence: he wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few hazards. He used almost always the same fabric of verse; and, indeed, by those few essays which he made of any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain consequence was readiness and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had in his mind, a systematical arrangement; having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increase of facility he confessed himself to have perceived in the progress of his translation. But what was yet of more importance, his effusions were always voluntary, and his subjects chosen by himself. His independence secured him from drudging at a task, and labouring upon a barren topic: he never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarcely ever temporary. He suffered coronations and royal marriages to pass without a song; and derived no opportunities from recent events, nor any popularity from the accidental disposition of his readers. He was never reduced to the necessity of soliciting the sun to shine upon a birthday, of calling the graces and virtues to a wedding, or of saying what multitudes have said before him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be silent.

His publications were for the same reason never hasty. He is said to have sent nothing to the press till it had lain two years under his inspection: it is at least certain, that he ventured nothing without nice examination. He suffered the tumult of imagination to subside, and the novelties of invention to grow familiar. He knew that the mind is always

enamoured of its own productions, and did not trust his first fondness. He consulted his friends, and listened with great willingness to criticism; and, what was of more importance, he consulted himself, and let nothing pass against his own judgment. He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared with his master.

Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shown by the dismissal of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for, when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do his best; he did not court the candour, but dared the judgment of his reader, and, expecting no indulgence from others, he showed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven. For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of "Thirty-eight"; of which Dodsley told me, that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line," he said, "was then written twice over; I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time." His declaration, that his care for his works ceased with their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the "Iliad," and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the "Essay on Criticism" received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour. Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who before he became an author had

been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation; and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope. Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden observes the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred, that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that, if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, Pope with perpetual delight. This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and inquiry may, perhaps, show him the reasonableness of my determination.

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH

1727-1788

By ALLAN CUNNINGHAM¹ (1784-1842)



Two eminent men, Wilson and Gainsborough, laid the foundation of our school of landscape; their works are full of the truest nature and the purest fancy, and their fame is now properly felt; yet of their personal history little is known save what the suspicious testimony of avowed enemies and careless friends — and the random notice of some periodical writers — may add to the vague stream of tradition.

Thomas Gainsborough, the fourth eminent name in British art, was born in the year 1727, at Sudbury, in Suffolk — the day of the month no one has mentioned. Of his father, whose name was John, by trade a clothier, and in religion a dissenter, I can only say with common belief that he was a stately and personable man, with something mysterious in his history, for the pastoral and timid rustics of Suffolk suspected him of carrying a dagger and pistols under his clothes. Of his mother, whose maiden name I have not learned, the same authority says that she was kind and indulgent to her children, and, moreover, somewhat proud of her sons, of whom she had three, all distinguished above their companions for talents and attainments. The family was of old standing, well to live, and of unblemished respectability.

Respecting Thomas, the youngest son, memory is still strong in Suffolk. Near Sudbury a beautiful wood of four miles' extent is shown, whose ancient trees, winding glades, and sunny nooks inspired him, while he was but a schoolboy, with the love of art. Scenes are pointed out where he used to sit and fill his copy-books with pencillings of flowers, and trees, and whatever pleased his fancy; and it is said that those early attempts of the child bore a distinct resemblance to the mature works of the man. At ten years old he had made some progress in sketching, and at twelve he was a confirmed painter. Good scholarship was, under such circumstances, out of the question; yet his letters which I have seen show no want in the art of expressing clear thoughts in clear words. His knowledge was obtained from his intercourse with mankind, and by his spirit of ready observation he supplied the deficiencies of education.

¹ Reprinted from the *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters*, etc., London, 1829.

The sketches which he made were concealed for a time; the secret, however, could no longer be kept. One day he had ventured to request a holiday, which was refused, and the audacious boy imposed his own penmanship on the master for the usual written request of his father, of "Give Tom a holiday." The trick was found out; his father looked upon the simulated paper with fear, and muttered, "The boy will come to be hanged!" but when he was informed that those stolen hours were bestowed upon the pencil, and some of Tom's sketches were shown to him, his brow cleared up, and he exclaimed, "The boy will be a genius!" Other stories of his early works are not wanting. On one occasion he was concealed among some bushes in his father's garden, making a sketch of an old fantastic tree, when he observed a man looking most wistfully over the wall at some pears, which were hanging ripe and tempting. The slanting light of the sun happened to throw the eager face into a highly picturesque mixture of light and shade, and Tom immediately sketched his likeness, much to the poor man's consternation afterwards, and much to the amusement of his father, when he taxed the peasant with the intention of plundering his garden, and showed him how he looked. Gainsborough long afterwards made a finished painting of this Sudbury rustic — a work much admired amongst artists — under the name of Tom Peartree's portrait. He loved to show his powers in such hasty things; and, from the unembarrassed freedom of mind and hand with which he produced them, they take rank with his happiest compositions.

Of his early sketches made in the woods of Sudbury few, I apprehend, now exist, though they were once numerous. No fine clump of trees, no picturesque stream, nor romantic glade — no cattle grazing, nor flocks reposing, nor peasants pursuing their rural or pastoral occupations — escaped his diligent pencil. Those hasty sketches were all treasured up as materials to be used when his hand should have become skilful; he showed them to his visitors, and called them his riding-school. As his reputation rose he became less satisfied with these early proofs of talent, and scattered them with a profuse hand amongst friends and visitors. To one lady he made a present of twenty; but so injudiciously were these precious things bestowed, that the lady pasted them round the walls of her apartment, and, as she soon left London, they became the property of the next inhabitant. His *first* drawing was a clump of trees; he long retained it, and one of his biographers says it was a "wonderful thing."

Talents so vigorous were acknowledged even in the seclusion of a country place; and his father was very willingly persuaded to send the youth, to prosecute his labours with the benefit of example and instruction, to London. No one has made him older than fourteen when he left Sudbury for the metropolis, and all agree that he studied under Hayman, one of the companions of Hogarth. Grignon, the engraver, who knew him well, informed Edwards, author of the "Anecdotes of Painters," that

Gainsborough received the *first* rudiments of his art from Gravelot. His genius, his history, his modest deportment, and his good looks, obtained him many friends; but he had not then formed any high notion of his own powers: he, at the most, considered himself as one whose skill might gain him a comfortable livelihood in a provincial town. He saw that historical painting was an unprofitable, and he felt it to be an uncongenial pursuit; no landscapes worthy of art had yet made their appearance, for Wilson was seeking bread in portraiture; he could not fail to see that his own works were essentially different from those which filled the easels of the artists in St. Martin's Lane — and mistrusted his success accordingly. He remained in London four years; and having acquired skill, and mastered some of the mystic tricks of colour and composition, he returned to his father's house a confirmed painter.

He was now in his eighteenth year, and the reputation of his talents, the modest gaiety of his conversation, and the extreme elegance of his person, rendered his company universally acceptable in his native place. He could not, indeed, learn modesty under Hayman; but he acquired the art of making use of his wit and his information with a graceful readiness, and his handsome form, and looks beaming with intelligence and genius, could not fail of doing him a good turn if he conducted himself wisely. It happened, in one of his pictorial excursions amongst the woods of Suffolk, that he sat down to make a sketch of some fine trees, with sheep reposing below, and wood-doves roosting above, when a young woman entered unexpectedly upon the scene, and was at once admitted into the landscape and the feelings of the artist. The name of this young lady was Margaret Burr; she was of Scottish extraction, and in her sixteenth year, and to the charms of good sense and good looks was added a clear annuity of two hundred pounds. These are matters which no writer of romance would overlook; and were accordingly felt by a young, an ardent, and susceptible man; nor must I omit to tell that country rumour conferred other attractions — she was said to be the natural daughter of one of our exiled princes; nor was she, when a wife and mother, desirous of having this circumstance forgotten. On an occasion of household festivity, when her husband was high in fame, she vindicated some little ostentation in her dress by whispering to her niece, "I have some right to this — for you know, my love, I am a prince's daughter." Prince's daughter or not, she was wooed and won by Gainsborough, and made him a kind, a prudent, and a submissive wife. The courtship was short. The young pair left Sudbury, leased a small house at a rent of six pounds a year in Ipswich, and making themselves happy in mutual love, conceived they were settled for life.

In Ipswich it was his destiny to become acquainted with Philip Thicknesse, governor of Languard Fort — a gentleman who befriended him at first and maligned him afterwards. This person instantly threw the mantle

of his patronage over him. It is not unusual to see a friend of this fashion marching triumphantly before genius as it is struggling into distinction, and imagining all the while that from his notice the other's reputation arises. Gainsborough was as yet little known, and had few friends; his excellency lived in a lonely place, and was desirous of having his solitude enlivened by a visitor whose wit was abundant and his pencil ready. While the artist continued humble the patron was kind: but as he began to assert his own independence, the esteem of the other subsided, and the vain friend became the avowed enemy. Had this been all, it might have been regretted less; but, so soon as the artist died, Thicknesse, under pretence of writing a sketch of his life, produced an unworthy pamphlet, which misrepresented him as a man while it praised him as a painter. It is indeed unsafe to follow it for a single page; but as honey is found in the basest weed, so may truth be extracted from this malignant narrative. I shall only adopt such anecdotes as are corroborated by internal evidence, and have been confirmed or corrected by the living reepresentatives of the house of Gainsborough.

The first meeting of the artist and the governor was in character. The latter, whilst taking a walk in a friend's garden, saw a melancholy face looking over the wall. As the stranger remained long in the same position, he advanced to accost him, when he perceived it to be a piece of wood shaped and painted like a man, and stationed as a sentinel in the adjoining garden of Gainsborough. This species of joke corresponded with the taste of the governor—he waited on the artist, and upbraided him with having imposed a shadow upon him for a substance. The compliment was not ill received, and he was shown into the painting-room, where he found many portraits which he thought but indifferently executed, and more landscapes, which he at once pronounced to be works of spirit and fancy. Amongst the former was the head of Admiral Vernon, and the portrait of the identical Tom Peartree, who longed for the ripe pears in Sudbury garden.

Of his productions in those early days Thicknesse is the only man who speaks, and I must use his words. "Madam Nature, not man, was then his only study, and he seemed intimately acquainted with that beautiful lady." So far well.—"I was the first man," continues the governor, "who perceived through clouds of bad colouring, what an accurate eye he possessed, and the truth of his drawings, and who dragged him from the obscurity of a country town, at a time when all his neighbours were as ignorant of his great talents as he was himself." This is the modesty of patronage! Gainsborough had shown a strong consciousness of talents, for he depended upon them for bread before he was eighteen years old; and some of his neighbours had appreciated his genius, since they had counselled his removal to the academies of London.

The governor gave him a commission to paint Landguard Fort, in-

cluding the neighbouring hills, and the port of Harwich, price thirty guineas, and, to sum up all, he lent him a fiddle; on which he ere long made such proficiency, that the governor, though a skilful musician himself, declares he would as soon have tried to paint against him as fiddle against him. An engraving by Major of the picture of Landguard Fort spread abroad the name of Gainsborough; the vanity of Thicknesse, and the desire which the artist had of distinction, were gratified, and they appear to have lived in great amity through the united influence of painting and fiddling. Of the original painting of the Fort nothing now remains; it was hung on a wall built with mortar mixed with sea-water, and so perished.

The increasing fame of Gainsborough demanded a wider field; he had exhausted the faces and the scenery of Ipswich, and the counsel of Thicknesse agreeing with his own wishes, removed to Bath in the year 1758, and took lodgings in the Circus, at the rate of fifty pounds annually. He was now in the thirty-first year of his age, and his fame was in some degree established — yet so small, in spite of the boasted patronage of the governor, had his success been, that his wife, come of a prudent nation, if not of a prudent family, was alarmed, remonstrated against this increase of expenditure, and was with some difficulty appeased.

It formed part of the plan of the governor, who conceived himself to be very popular in Bath, that his portrait, painted on purpose, “should serve as a decoy duck for customers.” The artist himself, however, seems to have given less enthusiasm to this project than his friend. He had begun to grow weary of offering up continual incense to this vain deity; and to wish to be relieved from this overwhelming patronage of one who claimed the fame arising from his works, and the privilege of directing his studies. From some hints which his excellency throws out, I apprehend that he attributed this independent movement to the influence of Mrs. Gainsborough. But the artist must, I believe, have the whole honour of this to himself. Thicknesse seems never to have suspected that, though Gainsborough was a pleasant companion, and one who indulged in sallies of merriment and humour, he concealed, under all this, a variable temper, and a spirit shy, proud, intrepid and intractable. His wife whatever the governor has insinuated to the contrary, was a remarkably mild and sweet-tempered woman — I repeat the words of Mrs. Lane — who gave her husband his own way, and never sought to win him to her wishes but by gentleness. Indeed, he was one of the last that would have brooked control; and so proud, or so whimsical, that he never rode up to his own door in a hackney-coach, and admonished his niece to avoid doing so if she loved him. Those who knew both Thicknesse and Gainsborough were only surprised that they continued friends so long. The tide was now on the turn; the portrait proposed by the governor as a profitable decoy was left untouched; the heads of men of inferior mark were limned off by the

dozen, and landscapes, which contained other beauties than those of Landguard Fort, were painted; the patron lost patience and remonstrated; the pride of the painter was hurt, and he forthwith resolved to free himself from the encumbrance of a sort of patronizing nightmare, who, under pretence of caressing, seemed disposed to suffocate him. The dissolution of their friendship, however, was the work of years.

In the meanwhile, Gainsborough gave all his time to portrait, to landscape, and to music. Portrait-painting, like the poet with the two mistresses, had his visits, but landscape and music had his heart. His price for a head rose from five guineas to eight, and as his fame increased, the charge augmented till he had forty guineas for a half, and a hundred for a whole length. Riches now flowed in, for his hand was ready and diligent; his wife was relieved from her fears in the matter of money; and he was enabled to indulge himself after his own fashion. Books he admired little: in one of his letters he says that he was well read in the volume of nature, and that was learning sufficient for him; the intercourse of literary men he avoided as carefully as Reynolds courted it: but he was fond of company, and passionately so of music. He considered a good musician as one of the first of men, and a good instrument as one of the noblest works of human skill. All the hours of intermission in his profession he gave to fiddles and rebecs. To this period the following characteristic story has been ascribed, and though strange, it seems true: —

“Gainsborough’s profession,” says his friend Jackson, “was painting, and music was his amusement; yet there were times when music seemed to be his employment and painting his diversion. As his skill in music has been celebrated, I shall mention what degree of merit he possessed as a musician. He happened on a time to see a theorbo in a picture of Vandyke’s, and concluded, because perhaps it was finely painted, that the theorbo must be a fine instrument. He recollected to have heard of a German professor, and ascending to his garret found him dining on roasted apples, and smoking his pipe, with his theorbo beside him. ‘I am come to buy your lute — name your price, and here’s your money.’ ‘I cannot sell my lute.’ ‘No, not for a guinea or two — but you must sell it, I tell you.’ ‘My lute is worth much money — it is worth ten guineas.’ ‘Ay! that it is — see, here’s the money.’ So saying, he took up the instrument, laid down the price, went half-way down the stair, and returned. ‘I have done but half my errand; what is your lute worth if I have not your book?’ ‘What book, Master Gainsborough?’ ‘Why, the book of airs you have composed for the lute.’ ‘Ah, sir, I can never part with my book!’ ‘Poh! you can make another at any time — this is the book I mean — there’s ten guineas for it — so once more good day.’ He went down a few steps, and returned again. ‘What use is your book to me if I don’t understand it? and your lute, you may take it again if you won’t teach me to play on it. Come home with me, and give me the first lesson.’ ‘I will come to-

morrow.' 'You must come now.' 'I must dress myself.' 'For what? You are the best figure I have seen today.' 'I must shave, sir.' 'I honour your beard!' 'I must, however, put on my wig.' 'Damn your wig! your cap and beard become you! Do you think if Vandyke was to paint you, he'd let you be shaved?' In this manner he frittered away his musical talents, and though possessed of ear, taste, and genius, he never had application enough to learn his notes. He seemed to take the first step, the second was of course out of his reach, and the summit became unattainable."

He was so passionately attached to music that he filled his house with all manner of instruments, and allowed his table to be infested with all sorts of professors save bagpipers. He loved Giardini and his violin — he admired Abel and his viol-di-gamba — he patronized Fischer and his hautboy — and was in raptures with a strolling harper, who descended from the Welsh mountains into Bath. When he dined, he talked of music; when he painted, he discoursed with his visitors and sitters on its merits; and when he had leisure, he practised by fits and starts on his numerous instruments, and, notwithstanding Jackson's opinion, his performance was worthy of praise.

One of his acquaintances in Bath was Wiltshire, the public carrier, a kind and worthy man, who loved Gainsborough, and admired his works. In one of his landscapes he wished to introduce a horse, and as the carrier had a very handsome one, he requested the loan of it for a day or two, and named his purpose; his generous neighbour bridled it and saddled it, and sent it as a present. The painter was not a man to be outdone in acts of generosity; he painted the wagon and horses of his friend, put his whole family and himself into it, and sent it well framed to Wiltshire, with his kind respects. It is considered a very capital performance. From 1761, when Gainsborough began to exhibit his paintings at the Academy, till his removal from Bath in 1774, Wiltshire was annually employed to carry his pictures to and from London; he took great care of them, and constantly refused to accept money, saying, "No — no — I admire painting too much," and plunged his hands in his pockets to secure them against the temptation of the offered payment. Perceiving, however, that this was not acceptable to the proud artist, the honest carrier hit upon a scheme which pleased both. "When you think," said he, "that I have *carried* to the value of a little painting, I beg you will let me have one, sir; and I shall be more than paid." In this coin the painter paid Wiltshire, and overpaid him. His son is still in possession of several of these pictures, and appreciates their value; many of Gainsborough's productions were not so worthily disposed of.

Of his works during his residence at Bath I am not enabled to give any particular account. They were no doubt numerous, since he could live in the style of a gentleman, and entertain company. His brothers were made sensible of his change of fortune, and it must be related to his

honour that all his kindred and connexions speak of him as a kind and generous man, who anticipated wants, and bore his fortunes meekly. Nor was the governor of Landguard Fort himself without a small share in these showers of good fortune. The artist appears to have discovered that money would not be unwelcome in the household of his friend, and to have taken a singular and delicate mode of lending his assistance. I must first, however, relate this story as Thicknesse himself has told it.

Among the instruments of music which Gainsborough loved, I have named the viol-di-gamba, and Mrs. Thicknesse had one, made in the year 1612, on which she played with much skill and effect. He appeared one evening to be exceedingly charmed with the instrument, and said, "I love it so much that I will willingly give a hundred guineas for it." She desired him to stay to supper; she placed the viol-di-gamba beside him, he took it up and played in a manner so masterly, that Mrs. Thicknesse said, "You deserve an instrument on which you play so well; and I beg your acceptance of it, on the condition that you will give me my husband's picture to hang beside the one which you painted of me." The artist acquiesced; the viol-di-gamba was sent to him next morning; he stretched a canvas, took one sitting of some fifteen minutes' duration, and then laid it aside for other works. The lady was incensed, and the husband remonstrated; Gainsborough returned the viol-di-gamba, and never touched the picture more.

Such is the story of Thicknesse: the family version, communicated to me by a lady who had it from Mrs. Gainsborough herself, is somewhat different. The painter (according to this account) put a hundred guineas privately into the hands of Mrs. Thicknesse for the viol-di-gamba; her husband, who might not be aware of what passed, renewed his wish for his portrait; and obtained what he conceived to be a promise that it should be painted. This double benefaction was, however, more than Gainsborough had contemplated: he commenced the portrait, but there it stopped; and after a time, resenting some injurious expressions from the lips of the governor, the artist sent him the picture, rough and unfinished as it was, and returned also the viol-di-gamba.

"This," said Thicknesse, "was a deadly blow to me; but I knew, though it seemed his act, it did not originate with him: he had been told that I said openly in the public coffee-house at Bath, that when I first knew him at Ipswich his children were running about the streets there without shoes or stockings; but the rascal who told him so was the villain who robbed the poor from the plate he held at the church door for alms." Such words as these were likely to sink deep into the proud heart of Gainsborough; and though Thicknesse denied them—as well he might, for they were untrue—they aided him in the resolution which he probably had long formed of making his escape from such crushing patronage and ungentle company. Even this necessary step was precipitated by Thick-

nesses himself. He sent back his portrait with a note requesting him to take his brush and first rub out the countenance of the truest and warmest friend he ever had; and having so done, then blot him for ever from his memory.

Gainsborough now removed to London, took a house in Pall Mall, which was built by Duke Schomberg, and removing all his paintings and drawings, and flutes and fiddles, bade farewell to Bath for ever.

Even to London the harassing protection of Thicknesse pursued him. "I was much alarmed," said that most prudent of patrons, "lest, with all his merit and genius, he might be in London a long time before he was properly known to that class of people who alone could *essentially* serve him; for of all the men I ever knew, he possessed least of that worldly knowledge to enable him to make his own way into the notice of the *great world*. I therefore wrote to Lord Bateman, who knew him, and who admired his talents, stating the above particulars, and urging him at the same time, for both our sakes, to give him countenance and make him known. His lordship, for me or for both our sakes, did so; and his remove from Bath to London proved as good a move as it was from Ipswich to Bath." The matchless vanity of this man made him believe not only that he was the sole cause of our painter's success in Bath, but that from his intercession with Lord Bateman sprang all the subsequent good fortune in London of the man who had already painted many noble productions, and who had exhibited them for thirteen years in succession in the Royal Academy.

He was now freed from this incumbrance, and continued his career in portraiture and landscape with fresh feeling and increasing success. His house was ample, his gallery was fit for the reception of the first in rank, and as the fame of the heads of Lord Kilmorrey, Mr. Quin, Mr. Medlicote, Mr. Mosey, Dr. Charlton, Mr. Fischer, and Mrs. Thicknesse had gone before him, he soon found good employment. Sir Joshua Reynolds was then in high favour; but even the rapid execution of the president could not satisfy the whole demand; and there was room for another, who, to just delineation of character, added a force and a freedom which approached and sometimes rivalled Vandyke. A conversation or family piece of the king, the queen, and the three royal sisters, was much admired; indeed, the permanent splendour of his colours, and the natural and living air which he communicated to whatever he touched, made him already, in the estimation of many, a rival, and a dangerous one, of the president himself.

Amongst those who sat to him was the Duchess of Devonshire — then in the bloom of youth, at once the loveliest of the lovely and the gayest of the gay. But her dazzling beauty, and the sense which he entertained of the charms of her looks, and her conversation, took away that readiness of hand and hasty happiness of touch which belonged to him in his or-

dinary moments. The portrait was so little to his satisfaction, that he refused to send it to Chatsworth. Drawing his wet pencil across a mouth which all who saw it thought exquisitely lovely, he said, "Her Grace is too hard for me." The picture was, I believed, destroyed. Amongst his papers were found two sketches of the duchess — both exquisitely graceful.

He had customers who annoyed him with other difficulties than those of too radiant loveliness. A certain lord, whom one of our biographers, out of compassion for rank, calls an *alderman*, came for his portrait; and that all might be worthy of his station, he had put on a new suit of clothes, richly-laced, with a well-powdered wig. Down he sat, and put on a practised look of such importance and prettiness, that the artist, who was no flatterer either with tongue or pencil, began to laugh, and was heard to mutter, "This will never do!" The patient having composed himself in conformity with his station, said, "Now, sir, I beg you will not overlook the dimple on my chin!" "Confound the dimple on your chin!" said Gainsborough — "I shall neither paint the one nor the other." And he laid down his brushes, and refused to resume them. Garrick, too, and Foote also came for their likenesses; he tried again and again, without success, and dismissed them in despair. "Rot them for a couple of rogues," he exclaimed, "they have everybody's faces but their own!" As the reader has already seen, David Garrick had the address to gratify Reynolds with a ludicrous account of this failure.

With others he was more fortunate. But, excellent as many of his portraits are, it was a desire to excel in many things which drew him from his favourite study of free and unsophisticated nature. There he surpassed all living men; in portrait, he was more than equalled by Reynolds. "Nature," says Thicknesse, in one of those moments when love of his early friend prevailed against hatred — "Nature sat to him in all her attractive attitudes of beauty; and his pencil traced, with peculiar and matchless facility, her finest and most delicate lineaments; whether it was the sturdy oak, the twisted eglantine, the mower whetting his scythe, the whistling ploughboy, or the shepherd under the hawthorn in the dale — all came forth equally chaste from his inimitable and fanciful pencil.

Though Gainsborough was not partial to the society of literary men, he seems to have been acquainted with Johnson and with Burke; and he lived on terms of great affection with Richard Brinsley Sheridan. He was also a welcome visitor at the table of Sir George Beaumont, a gentleman of graceful manners, who lived in old English dignity, and was, besides, a lover of literature and a painter of landscape. The latter loved to relate a curious anecdote of Gainsborough, which marks the unequal spirits of the man, and shows that he was the slave of wayward impulses which he could neither repress nor command. Sir George Beaumont, Sheridan, and Gainsborough had dined together, and the latter was more than usually pleasant and witty. The meeting was so much to their mutual

satisfaction, that they agreed to have another day's happiness, and accordingly an early day was named when they should dine again together. They met, but a cloud had descended upon the spirit of Gainsborough, and he sat silent, with a look of fixed melancholy, which no wit could dissipate. At length he took Sheridan by the hand, led him out of the room, and said, "Now don't laugh, but listen. I shall die soon — I know it — I feel it — I have less time to live than my looks infer — but for this I care not. What oppresses my mind is this: I have many acquaintances and few friends; and as I wish to have one worthy man to accompany me to the grave, I am desirous of bespeaking you — will you come — aye or no?" Sheridan could scarcely repress a smile, as he made the required promise; the looks of Gainsborough cleared up like the sunshine of one of his own landscapes; throughout the rest of the evening his wit flowed, and his humour ran over, and the minutes, like those of the poet, winged their way with pleasure.

Between Gainsborough and Reynolds there seems to have been little goodwill — surely the feuds of artists are more numerous than those of any other community of Christians. They at one time appeared desirous of making something like an exchange of portraits; and Gainsborough obtained one sitting of the president — but the piece, like that of Thicknesse, was never completed. The cold and carefully meted out courtesy of the one little suited with the curious mixture of candour and caprice in the other; and like frost and fire, which some convulsion casts into momentary contact, they jostled, and then retired from each other — never more to meet till Gainsborough summoned Reynolds to his death-bed. They had, however, a better sense of natural dignity than to carry their personal animosities, as Barry afterwards did, into the council; and if they differed in life, so in life they were mutually reconciled. Peace be with their memories!

The dates of Gainsborough's various productions cannot now be ascertained: it was one of the peculiarities of this eminent artist that he never put his name to any of his compositions, and very seldom even the date. He knew that his own happy character was too strongly impressed on his works to be denied; and thought, I suppose, that the excellence of a painting had nothing to do with the day or the year of its execution. "The Woodman and his Dog in the Storm" was one of his favourite compositions. There is a kind of rustic sublimity, new to English painting, in the heavenward look of the peasant, while the rain descends and the lightning flies. The same may be said of his "Shepherd's Boy in the Shower" — there is something inexpressibly mournful in the looks of both. The former unfortunately perished; but the sketch remains, and shows it to have been a work of the highest order. He valued it at one hundred guineas, but could find no purchaser while he lived; his widow sold it for five hundred guineas, after his death, to Lord Gainsborough, whose house was

subsequently burnt to the ground. Another of his own chief favourite works was the "Cottage Girl with Her Dog and Pitcher"—a happy and well-considered scene.

Like Reynolds, he painted standing in preference to sitting; and the pencils which he used had shafts, sometimes two yards long. He stood as far from his sitter as he did from his picture, that the hues might be the same. He generally rose early, commenced painting between nine and ten o'clock, wrought for four or five hours, and then gave up the rest of the day to visits, to music, and to domestic enjoyment. He loved to sit by the side of his wife during the evenings, and make sketches of whatever occurred to his fancy, all of which he threw below the table, save such as were more than commonly happy, and those were preserved, and either finished as sketches or expanded into paintings. In summer he had lodgings at Hampstead, for the sake of the green fields and the luxury of pure air; and in winter he was often seen refreshing his eyes with light at the window, when fatigued with close employment.

He was an admirer of elegant penmanship, and looked at a well-written letter with something of the same pleasure as at a fine landscape. His love of music was constant; and he seems to have been kept under a spell by all kinds of melodious sounds. Smith relates, in his life of Nollekens, that he once found Colonel Hamilton playing so exquisitely to Gainsborough on the violin, that he exclaimed, "Go on, and I will give you the picture of the 'Boy at the Stile,' which you have so often wished to purchase of me." The colonel proceeded, and the painter stood in speechless admiration, with the tears of rapture on his cheek. Hamilton then called a coach, and carried away the picture. This gentleman was a first-rate violin-player, and had the additional merit of having sparred with Mendoza!

Of the personal history of this distinguished man, the penury of contemporary biography prevents me from saying more. Fuseli, when editing Pilkington's "Dictionary of Painters," was, or affected to be, ignorant even of his Christian name; and so little did he feel the character of his works, that, on omitting some favourable notices in the supplement to the earlier editions, he says with a sneer, "Posterity will judge whether the name of Gainsborough deserves to be ranked with those of Vandyke, Rubens, and Claude, in portrait and in landscape." With wiser taste, and better feeling, Walpole exclaims, "What frankness of nature in Gainsborough's landscapes, which entitle them to rank in the noblest collections!" Fuseli seems to have entertained an unaccountable dislike to our amiable and highly-gifted artist.

About a year after the promise obtained from Sheridan to attend his funeral, he went to hear the impeachment of Warren Hastings, and, sitting with his back to an open window, suddenly felt something inconceivably cold touch his neck above the shirt collar. It was accompanied with stiffness and pain. On returning home he mentioned what he felt to his wife

and his niece; and, on looking, they saw a mark, about the size of a shilling, which was harder to the touch than the surrounding skin, and which he said still felt cold. The application of flannel did not remove it, and the artist, becoming alarmed, consulted, one after the other, the most eminent surgeons of London — John Hunter himself the last. They all declared there was no danger; but there was that presentiment upon Gainsborough from which none perhaps escape. He laid his hand repeatedly on his neck, and said to his sister, who had hastened to London to see him, "If this be a cancer, I am a dead man." And a cancer it proved to be. When this cruel disease fairly discovered itself, it was found to be inextricably interwoven with the threads of life, and he prepared himself for death with cheerfulness and perfect composure. He desired to be buried near his friend Kirby, in Kew churchyard; and that his name only should be cut on his gravestone. He sent for Reynolds, and peace was made between them. Gainsborough exclaimed to Sir Joshua, "We are all going to heaven, and Vandyke is of the company," and immediately expired — August 2nd, 1788, in the sixty-first year of his age. Sheridan and the president attended him to the grave.

In the spring which followed the death of Gainsborough, his widow, who survived him several years, made an exhibition of his works in Pall Mall, to the amount of fifty-six pictures, and one hundred and forty-eight drawings. They were all marked for sale, and some of them sold; and the remainder were dispersed by auction. After experiencing a variety of fortune, the far-famed "Blue Boy" (the portrait of a youth in a blue dress), and the still more celebrated "Cottage Door," found their way into the gallery of Lord Grosvenor. The former has a natural elevation of look, and great ease of attitude; but the cerulean splendour of his coat is at first somewhat startling.² The latter deserves a more particular commendation. It represents a cottage matron with an infant in her arms, and several older children around her, enjoying themselves at the door of a little rustic cabin. This lodge in the wilderness is deeply shut up in a close-wooded nook; through the shafts of the trees glimpses of knolls and streams are obtained. There is uncommon breadth and mass about it, with a richness of colouring, a sort of brown and glossy goldenness, which is common in the works of the artist. The matron herself is the perfect beau-ideal of a youthful cottage dame — rustic loveliness exalted by natural gentility of expression.

In person Gainsborough was eminently handsome, and when he wished to please, no one had in greater perfection a ready grace and persuasive manner — gifts that cannot be acquired. It is to be regretted that those who

² This picture, which is said to have been painted, as everyone knows, to refute Sir Joshua's objection to blue in mass in a painting, is not quite conclusive, though it must be owned that Gainsborough has done wonders with the cool tones at his command. In his treatment of blue he greatly resembled Vandyke.

wrote anything concerning him were careful in noting his eccentricities and chronicling his absurdities — forgetting much that was noble and excellent in the man. Little minds retain little things. His associates, such as Jackson and Thicknesse, perceived but those weaknesses which reduced him to their own level; they were slow or unwilling to perceive those qualities which raised him above them. The companions of the artist saved the chaff of his conversation and allowed the corn to escape. Their sole wish seems to be to show him as the poet painted himself —

*“A thing unteachable in worldly skill,
And half an idiot too — more helpless still;”*

and, but for the splendid works of the man, which exhibit a mind that could think boldly and act wisely, they had succeeded.

He never attempted literary composition; he was more desirous to give than to receive instruction, and therefore paid no court to the learned. His letters are nevertheless such as few literary men have composed; they are distinguished by innocent gaiety and happy wit. He flutters from subject to subject, always easy and lively; agreeable when he trifles, and instructive even when he is extravagant. He has been reproached with occasional licentiousness in conversation; and something of the sort, I must admit, peeps out here and there in his letters. He was far, however, from being habitually gross.

He was decided in his resolutions. In the year 1784 he sent to the exhibition a whole-length portrait, with instructions to hang it as low as the floor would allow. Some bye-law interposed — the council remonstrated — Gainsborough desired the picture to be returned, which was complied with — and he never sent another.

His drawings are numerous and masterly; no artist has left behind him so many exquisite relics of this kind. “I have seen,” said his friend Jackson, “at least a thousand, not one of which but what possesses merits, and some in a transcendent degree.” Many of them are equal in point of character to his most finished performances. They have all great length and singular freedom of handling. His sketches of ladies are the finest things I have ever seen. The Duchess of Devonshire shows herself in side view and in front; she seems to move and breathe among the groves of Chatsworth. The names of many are lost, but this is not important. New light, however, has lately been thrown on these perishable things by the painter's grand-nephew, Richard Lane, in whom much of his spirit survives. He has copied and published some two dozen of those fine sketches, and he ought to publish more.

The chief works of Gainsborough are not what is usually called landscapes, for he had no wish to create gardens of paradise, and leave them to the sole enjoyment of the sun and breeze. The wildest nooks of his woods have their living tenants, and in all his glades and his valleys we

see the sons and daughters of men. A deep human sympathy unites us with his pencil, and this is not lessened because all its works are stamped with the image of Old England. His paintings have a national look. He belongs to no school; he is not reflected from the glass of man, but from that of nature. He has not steeped his landscapes in the atmosphere of Italy, like Wilson, nor borrowed the postures of his portraits from the old masters, like Reynolds. No academy schooled down into uniformity and imitation the truly English and intrepid spirit of Gainsborough.

It must not, however, be denied, that his productions are sometimes disfigured by the impatience of his nature, and the fiery haste in which he wrought. Wishing to do quickly what his mind conceived strongly, he often neglected, in the dashing vigour of his hand, many of those lesser graces which lend art so much of its attractiveness. He felt the whole, indeed, at once; he was possessed fully with the sentiment of his subject; he struck off his favourite works at one continuous heat of thought, and all is clear, connected, and consistent. But, like nature herself, he performed some of his duties with a careless haste; and in many, both of his portraits and his landscapes, we see evident marks of inattention and hurry.

"It is certain," says Reynolds, "that all those odd scratches and marks which, on a close examination, are so observable in Gainsborough's pictures and which, even to experienced painters, appear rather the effect of accident than design — this chaos, this uncouth and shapeless appearance — by a kind of magic, at a certain distance, assumes form, and all the parts seem to drop into their proper places, so that we can hardly forbear acknowledging the full effect of diligence under the appearance of chance and hasty negligence. That Gainsborough himself considered this peculiarity in his manner, and the power it possesses in exciting surprise, as a beauty in his works, may be inferred from the eager desire which we know he always expressed that his pictures at the exhibition should be seen near as well as at a distance." The president, however, weakens this vindication a little, when, in the succeeding sentences, he says, "the imagination supplies the rest, and perhaps more satisfactorily to the spectator, if not more exactly than the artist with all his care could have done." Sir Joshua, no doubt, felt all this; but artists must not count on eyes and imaginations such as fell to the lot of the president.

There is a charm about the children running wild in the landscapes of Gainsborough, which is more deeply felt by comparing them with those of Reynolds. The children of Sir Joshua are indeed beautiful creations, free, artless, and lovely; but they seem all to have been nursed in velvet laps and fed with golden spoons. There is a rustic grace, an untamed wildness, about the children of the other, which speak of the country and of neglected toilets. They are the offspring of nature, running free among woods as wild as themselves. They are not afraid of disordering their satins and

wetting their kid shoes. They roll on the greensward, burrow like rabbits, and dabble in the running streams daily.

In this the works of Reynolds and Gainsborough are unlike each other — but both differ more materially from the great painters of Italy. The infants of Raphael, Titian, or Correggio are not meant for mortals, but for divinities. We hardly think of mothers' bosoms when we look at them. We admire — we can scarcely love them as much as we do the healthy children of our two eminent countrymen.

ROBERT BURNS

1759-1796

By THOMAS CARLYLE¹ (1795-1881)



IN the modern arrangements of society, it is no uncommon thing that a man of genius must, like Butler, "ask for bread and receive a stone"; for, in spite of our grand maxim of supply and demand, it is by no means the highest excellence that men are most forward to recognize. The inventor of a spinning-jenny is pretty sure of his reward in his own day; but the writer of a true poem, like the apostle of a true religion, is nearly as sure of the contrary. We do not know whether it is not an aggravation of the injustice, that there is generally a posthumous retribution. Robert Burns, in the course of Nature, might yet have been living; but his short life was spent in toil and penury; and he died, in the prime of his manhood, miserable and neglected: and yet already a brave mausoleum shines over his dust, and more than one splendid monument has been reared in other places to his fame; the street where he languished in poverty is called by his name; the highest personages in our literature have been proud to appear as his commentators and admirers; and here is the *sixth* narrative of his *Life* that has been given to the world!

Mr. Lockhart thinks it necessary to apologize for this new attempt on such a subject: but his readers, we believe, will readily acquit him; or, at worst, will censure only the performance of his task, not the choice of it. The character of Burns, indeed, is a theme that cannot easily become either trite or exhausted; and will probably gain rather than lose in its dimensions by the distance to which it is removed by Time. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet; and this is probably true; but the fault is at least as likely to be the valet's as the hero's. For it is certain, that to the vulgar eye few things are wonderful that are not distant. It is difficult for men to believe that the man, the mere man whom they see, nay perhaps painfully feel, toiling at their side through the poor jostlings of existence, can be made of finer clay than themselves. Suppose that some dining acquaintance of Sir Thomas Lucy's, and neighbour of John a Combe's, had snatched an hour or two from the preservation of his game, and written us a *Life* of Shakespeare! What dissertations should we not have had, — not on *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, but on the wool-trade, and

¹ Reprinted from the *Miscellanies*, this biography appeared originally (1828) as a review of Lockhart's *Burns*.

deer-stealing, and the libel and vagrant laws; and how the Poacher became a Player; and how Sir Thomas and Mr. John had Christian bowels, and did not push him to extremities! In like manner, we believe, with respect to Burns, that till the companions of his pilgrimage, the Honourable Excise Commissioners, and the Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt, and the Dumfries Aristocracy, and all the Squires and Earls, equally with the Ayr Writers, and the New and Old Light Clergy, whom he had to do with, shall have become invisible in the darkness of the Past, or visible only by light borrowed from *his* juxtaposition, it will be difficult to measure him by any true standard, or to estimate what he really was and did, in the eighteenth century, for his country and the world. It will be difficult, we say; but still a fair problem for literary historians; and repeated attempts will give us repeated approximations.

His former Biographers have done something, no doubt, but by no means a great deal, to assist us. Dr. Currie and Mr. Walker, the principal of these writers, have both, we think, mistaken one essentially important thing: their own and the world's true relation to their author, and the style in which it became such men to think and to speak of such a man. Dr. Currie loved the poet truly; more perhaps than he avowed to his readers, or even to himself; yet he everywhere introduces him with a certain patronizing, apologetic air; as if the polite public might think it strange and half unwarrantable that he, a man of science, a scholar and gentleman, should do such honour to a rustic. In all this, however, we readily admit that his fault was not want of love, but weakness of faith; and regret that the first and kindest of all our poet's biographers should not have seen farther, or believed more boldly what he saw. Mr. Walker offends more deeply in the same kind: and both err alike in presenting us with a detached catalogue of his several supposed attributes, virtues and vices, instead of a delineation of the resulting character as a living unity. This, however, is not painting a portrait; but gauging the length and breadth of the several features, and jotting down their dimensions in arithmetical ciphers. Nay it is not so much as that: for we are yet to learn by what arts or instruments the mind *could* be so measured and gauged.

Mr. Lockhart, we are happy to say, has avoided both these errors. He uniformly treats Burns as the high and remarkable man the public voice has now pronounced him to be: and in delineating him, he has avoided the method of separate generalities, and rather sought for characteristic incidents, habits, actions, sayings; in a word, for aspects which exhibit the whole man, as he looked and lived among his fellows. The book accordingly, with all its deficiencies, gives more insight, we think, into the true character of Burns, than any prior biography: though, being written on the very popular and condensed scheme of an article for Constable's *Miscellany*, it has less depth than we could have wished and expected from a writer of such power; and contains rather more, and more multi-

furious quotations than belong of right to an original production. Indeed, Mr. Lockhart's own writing is generally so good, so clear, direct and nervous, that we seldom wish to see it making place for another man's. However, the spirit of the work is throughout candid, tolerant and anxiously conciliating; compliments and praises are liberally distributed, on all hands, to great and small; and, as Mr. Morris Birkbeck observes of the society in the backwoods of America, "the courtesies of polite life are never lost sight of for a moment." But there are better things than these in the volume; and we can safely testify, not only that it is easily and pleasantly read a first time, but may even be without difficulty read again.

Nevertheless, we are far from thinking that the problem of Burns's Biography has yet been adequately solved. We do not allude so much to deficiency of facts or documents, — though of these we are still every day receiving some fresh accession, — as to the limited and imperfect application of them to the great end of Biography. Our notions upon this subject may perhaps appear extravagant; but if an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and man's life, from his particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did coexisting circumstances modify him from without; how did he modify these from within? With what endeavours and what efficacy rule over them; with what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society? He who should answer these questions, in regard to any individual, would, as we believe, furnish a model of perfection in Biography. Few individuals, indeed, can deserve such a study; and many *lives* will be written, and, for the gratification of innocent curiosity, ought to be written, and read and forgotten, which are not in this sense *biographies*. But Burns, if we mistake not, is one of these few individuals; and such a study, at least with such a result, he has not yet obtained. Our own contributions to it, we are aware, can be but scanty and feeble; but we offer them with goodwill, and trust they may meet with acceptance from those they are intended for.

Burns first came upon the world as a prodigy; and was, in that character, entertained by it, in the usual fashion, with loud, vague, tumultuous wonder, speedily subsiding into censure and neglect; till his early and most mournful death again awakened an enthusiasm for him, which, especially as there was now nothing to be done, and much to be spoken, has prolonged itself even to our own time. It is true, the "nine days" have long since elapsed; and the very continuance of this clamour proves that Burns was no vulgar wonder. Accordingly, even in sober judgments, where, as

years passed by, he has come to rest more and more exclusively on his own intrinsic merits, and may now be well-nigh shorn of that casual radiance, he appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century. Let it not be objected that he did little. He did much, if we consider where and how. If the work performed was small, we must remember that he had his very materials to discover; for the metal he worked in lay hid under the desert moor, where no eye but his had guessed its existence; and we may almost say, that with his own hand he had to construct the tools for fashioning it. For he found himself in deepest obscurity, without help, without instruction, without model; or with models only of the meanest sort. An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time; and he works, accordingly, with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is *his* state who stands on the outside of that store house, and feels that its gates must be stormed, or remain forever shut against him! His means are the commonest and rudest; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down with a pickaxe; and he must be a Titan that hurls them abroad with his arms.

It is in this last shape that Burns presents himself. Born in an age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen, and in a condition the most disadvantageous, where his mind, if it accomplished aught, must accomplish it under the pressure of continual bodily toil, nay, of penury and corresponding apprehension of the worst evils, and with no furtherance but such knowledge as dwells in a poor man's hut, and the rhymes of a Ferguson or Ramsay for his standard of beauty, he sinks not under all these impediments: through the fogs and darkness of that obscure region, his lynx eye discerns the true relations of the world and human life; he grows into intellectual strength, and trains himself into intellectual expertness. Impelled by the expansive movement of his own irrespressible soul, he struggles forward into the general view; and with haughty modesty lays down before us, as the fruit of his labour, a gift, which Time has now pronounced imperishable. Add to all this, that his darksome drudging childhood and youth was by far the kindest era of his whole life; and that he died in his thirty-seventh year: and then ask, If it be strange that his poems are imperfect, and of small extent, or that his genius attained no mastery in its art? Alas, his Sun shone as through a tropical tornado; and the pale shadow of death eclipsed it at noon! Shrouded in such baleful vapours, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendour, enlightening the world: but some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colours, into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears!

We are anxious not to exaggerate; for it is exposition rather than admiration that our readers require of us here; and yet to avoid some tendency to that side is no easy matter. We love Burns, and we pity him; and love and pity are prone to magnify. Criticism, it is sometimes thought, should be a cold business; we are not so sure of this; but, at all events, our concern with Burns is not exclusively that of critics. True and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us. He was often advised to write a tragedy: time and means were not lent him for this; but through life he enacted a tragedy, and one of the deepest. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene; whether Napoleon himself, left to brawl with Sir Hudson Lowe, and perish on his rock, "amid the melancholy main," presented to the reflecting mind such a "spectacle of pity and fear" as did this intrinsically nobler, gentler and perhaps greater soul, wasting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him, till only death opened him an outlet. Conquerors are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathizing loftiness and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection; at best it may excite amazement; and their fall, like that of a pyramid, will be beheld with a certain sadness and awe. But a true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the "Eternal Melodies," is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns; but with queenlike indifference she cast it from her hand, like a thing of no moment; and it was defaced and torn asunder, as an idle bauble, before we recognized it. To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny, — for so in our ignorance we must speak, — his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him; and that spirit, which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning! The "Daisy" falls not unheeded under his ploughshare; nor the ruined nest of that "wee, cowering, timourous beastie," cast forth, after all its provident pains, to "thole the sleety dribble and cranreuch cauld." The "hoar visage" of Winter delights him; he dwells with a sad and oft-returning fondness in these scenes of

solemn desolation; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, for "it raises his thoughts to *Him that walketh on the wings of the wind.*" A true Poet-soul, for it needs but to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music! but observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men. What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, boundless love; what generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons of Earth. The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion, but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him: Poverty is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are dear and venerable to his heart: and thus over the lowest provinces of man's existence he pours the glory of his own soul; and they rise, in shadow and sunshine, softened and brightened into a beauty which other eyes discern not in the highest. He has a just self-consciousness, which too often degenerates into pride; yet it is a noble pride, for defence, not for offence; no cold suspicious feeling, but a frank and social one. The Peasant Poet bears himself, we might say, like a King in exile: he is cast among the low, and feels himself equal to the highest; yet he claims no rank, that none may be disputed to him. The forward he can repel, the supercilious he can subdue; pretensions of wealth or ancestry are of no avail with him; there is a fire in that dark eye, under which the "insolence of condescension" cannot thrive. In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of Poetry and Manhood. And yet, far as he feels himself above common men, he wanders not apart from them, but mixes warmly in their interests; nay, throws himself into their arms, and, as it were, entreats them to love him. It is moving to see how, in his darkest despondency, this proud being still seeks relief from friendship; unbosoms himself, often to the unworthy; and, amid tears, strains to his glowing heart a heart that knows only the name of friendship. And yet he was "quick to learn"; a man of keen vision, before whom common disguises afforded no concealment. His understanding saw through the hollowness even of accomplished deceivers; but there was a generous credulity in his heart. And so did our Peasant show himself among us; "a soul like an Æolian harp," in whose strings "the vulgar wind, as it passed through them, changed itself into articulate melody." And this was he for whom the world found no fitter business than quarrelling with smugglers and vintners, computing excise-dues upon tallow, and gauging ale-barrels! In such toils was that mighty Spirit sorrowfully wasted: and a hundred years may pass on, before another such is given us to waste.

All that remains of Burns, the Writings he has left, seem to us, as we hinted above, no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for completeness: culture, leisure, true effort, nay even length of life. His poems are, with scarcely any exception, mere occasional effusions; poured forth with little premeditation; expressing, by such means as offered, the passion, opinion, or humour of the hour. Never in one instance was it permitted him to grapple with any subject with the full collection of his strength, to fuse and mould it in the concentrated fire of his genius. To try by the strict rules of Art such imperfect fragments, would be at once unprofitable and unfair. Nevertheless, there is something in these poems, marred and defective as they are, which forbids the most fastidious student of poetry to pass them by. Some sort of enduring quality they must have: for after fifty years of the wildest vicissitudes in poetic taste, they still continue to be read; nay, are read more and more eagerly, more and more extensively; and this not only by literary virtuosos, and that class upon whom transitory causes operate most strongly, but by all classes, down to the most hard, unlettered and truly natural class, who read little, and especially no poetry, except because they find pleasure in it. The grounds of so singular and wide a popularity, which extends, in a literal sense, from the palace to the hut, and over all regions where the English tongue is spoken, are well worth inquiring into. After every just deduction, it seems to imply some rare excellence in these works. What is that excellence?

To answer this question will not lead us far. The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognized: his *Sincerity*, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wiredrawn refinings, either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes that he has lived and laboured amidst, that he describes: those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can; "in homely rustic jingle"; but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. Horace's rule, *Si vis me flere*, is applicable in a wider sense than the literal one. To every poet, to every writer, we might say: Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine

earnestness of thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him; but in either case, his words, if they are earnest and sincere, will find some response within us; for in spite of all casual varieties in outward rank or inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.

This may appear a very simple principle, and one which Burns had little merit in discovering. True, the discovery is easy enough: but the practical appliance is not easy; is indeed the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with, and which scarcely one in the hundred ever fairly surmounts. A head too dull to discriminate the true from the false; a heart too dull to love the one at all risks, and to hate the other in spite of all temptations, are alike fatal to a writer. With either, or as more commonly happens, with both of these deficiencies combine a love of distinction, a wish to be original, which is seldom wanting, and we have Affectation, the bane of literature, as Cant, its elder brother, is of morals. How often does the one and the other front us, in poetry, as in life! Great poets themselves are not always free of this vice; nay, it is precisely on a certain sort and degree of greatness that it is most commonly ingrafted. A strong effort after excellence will sometimes solace itself with a mere shadow of success; he who has much to unfold, will sometimes unfold it imperfectly. Byron, for instance, was no common man: yet if we examine his poetry with this view, we shall find it far enough from faultless. Generally speaking, we should say that it is not true. He refreshes us, not with the divine fountain, but too often with vulgar strong waters, stimulating indeed to the taste, but soon ending in dislike, or even nausea. Are his Harolds and Giaours, we ask, real men; we mean, poetically consistent and conceivable men? Do not these characters, does not the character of their author, which more or less shines through them all, rather appear a thing put on for the occasion; no natural or possible mode of being, but something intended to look much grander than nature? Surely, all these stormful agonies, this volcanic heroism, superhuman contempt and moody desperation, with so much scowling, and teeth-gnashing, and other sulphurous humour, is more like the brawling of a player in some paltry tragedy, which is to last three hours, than the bearing of a man in the business of life, which is to last threescore and ten years. To our minds there is a taint of this sort, something which we should call theatrical, false, affected, in every one of these otherwise so powerful pieces. Perhaps *Don Juan*, especially the latter parts of it, is the only thing approaching to a *sincere* work, he ever wrote; the only work where he showed himself, in any measure, as he was; and seemed so intent on his subject as, for moments, to forget himself. Yet Byron hated this vice; we believe, heartily detested it: nay he had declared formal

war against it in words. So difficult is it even for the strongest to make this primary attainment, which might seem the simplest of all: to *read its own consciousness without mistakes*, without errors involuntary or wilful! We recollect no poet of Burns's susceptibility who comes before us from the first, and abides with us to the last, with such a total want of affectation. He is an honest man, and an honest writer. In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, he is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no lustre but his own. We reckon this to be a great virtue; to be, in fact, the root of most other virtues, literary as well as moral.

Here, however, let us say, it is to the Poetry of Burns that we now allude; to those writings which he had time to meditate, and where no special reason existed to warp his critical feeling, or obstruct his endeavour to fulfil it. Certain of his letters, and other fractions of prose composition, by no means deserve this praise. Here, doubtless, there is not the same natural truth of style; but on the contrary, something not only stiff, but strained and twisted; a certain high-flown inflated tone; the stilted emphasis of which contrasts ill with the firmness and rugged simplicity of even his poorest verses. Thus no man, it would appear, is altogether unaffected. Does not Shakespeare himself sometimes premeditate the sheerest bombast! But even with regard to these Letters of Burns, it is but fair to state that he had two excuses. The first was his comparative deficiency in language. Burns, though for most part he writes with singular force and even gracefulness, is not master of English prose, as he is of Scottish verse; not master of it, we mean, in proportion to the depth and vehemence of his matter. These Letters strike us as the effort of a man to express something which he has no organ fit for expressing. But a second and weightier excuse is to be found in the peculiarity of Burns's social rank. His correspondents are often men whose relation to him he has never accurately ascertained; whom therefore he is either fore-arming himself against, or else unconsciously flattering, by adopting the style he thinks will please them. At all events, we should remember that these faults, even in his Letters, are not the rule, but the exception. Whenever he writes, as one would ever wish to do, to trusted friends and on real interests, his style becomes simple, vigorous, expressive, sometimes even beautiful. His letters to Mrs. Dunlop are uniformly excellent.

But to return to his Poetry. In addition to its Sincerity, it has another peculiar merit, which indeed is but a mode, or perhaps a means, of the foregoing: this displays itself in his choice of subjects; or rather in his indifference as to subjects, and the power he has of making all subjects interesting. The ordinary poet, like the ordinary man, is forever seeking in external circumstances the help which can be found only in himself. In what is familiar and near at hand, he discerns no form or comeliness: home is not poetical but prosaic; it is in some past, distant, conventional

heroic world, that poetry resides; were he there and not here, were he thus and not so, it would be well with him. Hence our innumerable host of rose-coloured Novels and iron-mailed Epics, with their locality not on the Earth, but somewhere nearer to the Moon. Hence our Virgins of the Sun, and our Knights of the Cross, malicious Saracens in turbans, and copper-coloured Chiefs in wampum, and so many other truculent figures from the heroic times or the heroic climates, who on all hands swarm in our poetry. Peace be with them! But yet, as a great moralist proposed preaching to the men of this century, so would we fain preach to the poets, "a sermon on the duty of staying at home." Let them be sure that heroic ages and heroic climates can do little for them. That form of life has attraction for us, less because it is better or nobler than our own, than simply because it is different; and even this attraction must be of the most transient sort. For will not our own age, one day, be an ancient one; and have as quaint a costume as the rest; not contrasted with the rest, therefore, but ranked along with them, in respect of quaintness? Does Homer interest us now, because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece, and two centuries before he was born; or because he wrote what passed in God's world, and in the heart of man, which is the same after thirty centuries? Let our poets look to this: is their feeling really finer, truer, and their vision deeper than that of other men,—they have nothing to fear, even from the humblest subject; is it not so,—they have nothing to hope, but an ephemeral favour, even from the highest.

The poet, we imagine, can never have far to seek for a subject: the elements of his art are in him, and around him on every hand; for him the Ideal world is not remote from the Actual, but under it and within: nay, he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place; for here too is man's existence, with its infinite longings and small acquirings; its ever-thwarted, ever-renewed endeavours; its unspeakable aspirations, its fears and hopes that wander through Eternity; and all the mystery of brightness and of gloom that it was ever made of, in any age or climate, since man first began to live. Is there not the fifth act of a Tragedy in every death-bed, though it were a peasant's, and a bed of heath? And are wooings and weddings obsolete, that there can be Comedy no longer? Or are men suddenly grown wise, that Laughter must no longer shake his sides, but be cheated of his Farce? Man's life and nature is, as it was, and as it will ever be. But the poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them; or they come and pass away before him in vain. He is a *vates*, a seer; a gift of vision has been given him. Has life no meanings for him, which another cannot equally decipher; then he is no poet, and Delphi itself will not make him one.

In this respect, Burns, though not perhaps absolutely a great poet,

better manifests his capability, better proves the truth of his genius, than if he had by his own strength kept the whole Minerva Press going, to the end of his literary course. He shows himself at least a poet of Nature's own making; and Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite for the existence of a poet. Sometimes it is a certain sort of training; he must have studied certain things, studied for instance "the elder dramatists," and so learned a poetic language; as if poetry lay in the tongue, not in the heart. At other times we are told he must be bred in a certain rank, and must be on a confidential footing with the higher classes; because, above all things, he must see the world. As to seeing the world, we apprehend this will cause him little difficulty, if he have but eyesight to see it with. Without eyesight, indeed, the task might be hard. The blind or the purblind man "travels from Dan to Beersheba, and finds it all barren." But happily every poet is born *in* the world; and sees it, with or against his will, every day and every hour he lives. The mysterious workmanship of man's heart, the true light and the inscrutable darkness of man's destiny, reveal themselves not only in capital cities and crowded saloons, but in every hut and hamlet where men have their abode. Nay, do not the elements of all human virtues and all human vices; the passions at once of a Borgia and of a Luther, lie written, in stronger or fainter lines, in the consciousness of every individual bosom, that has practised honest self-examination? Truly, this same world may be seen in Mossgiel and Tarbolton, if we look well, as clearly as it ever came to light in Crockford's, or the Tuileries itself.

But sometimes still harder requisitions are laid on the poor aspirant to poetry; for it is hinted that he should have *been born* two centuries ago; inasmuch as poetry, about that date, vanished from the earth, and became no longer attainable by men! Such cobweb speculations have, now and then, overhung the field of literature; but they obstruct not the growth of any plant there: the Shakespeare or the Burns, unconsciously and merely as he walks onward, silently brushes them away. Is not every genius an impossibility till he appear? Why do we call him new and original, if *we* saw where his marble was lying, and what fabric he could rear from it? It is not the material but the workman that is wanting. It is not the dark *place* that hinders, but the dim *eye*. A Scottish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives, till Burns became a poet in it, and a poet of it; found it a *man's* life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battle-fields remain unsung; but the *Wounded Hare* has not perished without its memorial; a balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb agonies, because a poet was there. Our *Halloween* had passed and repassed, in rude awe and laughter, since the era of the Druids; but no Theocritus, till Burns, discerned in it the materials of a Scottish Idyl: neither was the *Holy Fair* any *Council of Trent* or Roman

Jubilee; but nevertheless, *Superstition* and *Hypocrisy* and *Fun* having been propitious to him, in this man's hand it became a poem, instinct with satire and genuine comic life. Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will, and true poetry will not be wanting.

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardour of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his "lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit." And observe with what a fierce prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason; some truth to be discovered? No sophistry, no vain surface-logic detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question; and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance; three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness. And, in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and yet the burin of a Retzsch is not more expressive or exact.

Of this last excellence, the plainest and most comprehensive of all, being indeed the root and foundation of *every* sort of talent, poetical or intellectual, we could produce innumerable instances from the writings of Burns. Take these glimpses of a snow-storm from his *Winter Night* (the italics are ours);

When biting Boreas, fell and dour,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r,
And Phæbus gies a short-liv'd glow
 Far south the lift,
 Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r
 Or whirling drift:

*'Ae night the storm the steeples rock'd,
 Poor labour sweet in sleep was lock'd,
 While burns wi' snawy wreaths upchok'd
 Wild-eddying swirl,
 Or thro' the mining outlet bock'd
 Down headlong hurl.*

Are there not "descriptive touches" here? The describer *saw* this thing; the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it; saw, and not with the eye only. "Poor labour locked in sweet sleep"; the dead stillness of man, unconscious, vanquished, yet not unprotected, while such strife of the material elements rages, and seems to reign supreme in loneliness: this is of the heart as well as of the eye! — Look also at his image of a thaw, and prophesied fall of the *Auld Brig*:

*When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains
 Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
 When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
 Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil,
 Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
 Or haunted Garpal² draws his feeble source,
 Arous'd by blust'ring winds and spotting thowes,
 In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes;
 While crashing ice, born on the roaring speat,
 Sweeps dams and mills and brigs a' to the gate;
 And from Glenbuck down to the Rottonkey,
 Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd tumbling sea;
 Then down ye'll hurl, Deil nor ye never rise!
 And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.*

The last line is in itself a Poussin-picture of that Deluge! The welkin has, as it were, bent down with its weight; the "gumlie jaups" and the "pouring skies" are mingled together; it is a world of rain and ruin. — In respect of mere clearness and minute fidelity, the *Farmer's* commendation of his *Auld Mare*, in plough or in cart, may vie with Homer's Smithy of the Cyclops, or yoking of Priam's Chariot. Nor have we forgotten stout *Burn-the-wind* and his brawny customers, inspired by *Scotch Drink*: but it is needless to multiply examples. One other trait of a much finer sort we select from multitudes of such among his *Songs*. It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling the saddest environment and local habitation:

*The pale Moon is setting beyond the white wave,
 And Time is setting wi' me, O;
 Farewell, false friends! false lover, farewell!
 I'll nae mair trouble them nor thee, O.*

² *Fabulosus* Hydaspes!

This clearness of sight we have called the foundation of all talent; for in fact, unless we *see* our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it, in our understanding, our imagination, our affections? Yet it is not in itself, perhaps, a very high excellence; but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest, or with ordinary power. Homer surpasses all men in this quality: but strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe. I belongs, in truth, to what is called a lively mind; and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases we have mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity; their descriptions are detailed, ample and lovingly exact; Homer's fire bursts through, from time to time, as if by accident; but Defoe and Richardson have no fire. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. Of the strength, the piercing emphasis with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his; words more memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigour and laconic pitch? A single phrase depicts a whole subject, a whole scene. We hear of "a gentleman that derived his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God." Our Scottish forefathers in the battle-field struggled forward "*red-wat-shod*": in this one word, a full vision of horror and carnage, perhaps too frightfully accurate for Art!

In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigour of his strictly intellectual perceptions. A resolute force is ever visible in his judgments, and in his feelings and volitions. Professor Stewart says of him, with some surprise: "All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities." But this, if we mistake not, is at all times the very essence of a truly poetical endowment. Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats, where the whole consists in a weak-eyed maudlin sensibility, and a certain vague random tunefulness of nature, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion. The feelings, the gifts that exist in the Poet are those that exist, with more or less development, in every human soul: the imagination, which shudders at the Hell of Dante, is the same faculty, weaker in degree, which called that picture into being. How does the Poet speak to men, with power, but by being still more a man than they? Shakespeare, it has been well observed, in the planning and completing of his tragedies, has shown an Understanding, were it nothing more, which might have governed states, or indicted a *Novum Organum*. What Burns's

force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging: it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw Philosophy; never rose, except by natural effort and for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication, if no proof sufficient, remains for us in his works: we discern the brawny movements of a gigantic though untutored strength; and can understand how, in conversation, his quick sure insight into men and things may, as much as aught else about him, have amazed the best thinkers of his time and country.

But, unless we mistake, the intellectual gift of Burns is fine as well as strong. The more delicate relations of things could not well have escaped his eye, for they were intimately present to his heart. The logic of the senate and the forum is indispensable, but not all-sufficient; nay perhaps the highest Truth is that which will the most certainly elude it. For this logic works by words, and "the highest," it has been said, "cannot be expressed in words." We are not without tokens of an openness for this higher truth also, of a keen though uncultivated sense for it, having existed in Burns. Mr. Stewart, it will be remembered, "wonders," in the passage above quoted, that Burns had formed some distinct conception of the "doctrine of association." We rather think that far subtler things than the doctrine of association had from of old been familiar to him. Here for instance:

"We know nothing," thus writes he, "or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so we cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident; or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities: a God that made all things, man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave."

Force and fineness of understanding are often spoken of as something different from general force and fineness of nature, as something partly independent of them. The necessities of language so require it; but in truth these qualities are not distinct and independent: except in special cases, and from special causes, they ever go together. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character; neither is delicacy in

the one kind often divided from delicacy in the other. No one, at all events, is ignorant that in the Poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling; that his *light* is not more pervading than his *warmth*. He is a man of the most impassioned temper; with passions not strong only, but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. It is reverence, it is love towards all Nature that inspires him, that open his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise. There is a true old saying, that "Love furthers knowledge": but above all, it is the living essence of that knowledge which makes poets; the first principle of its existence, increase, activity. Of Burns's fervid affection, his generous all-embracing Love, we have spoken already, as of the grand distinction of his nature, seen equally in word and deed, in his Life and in his Writings. It were easy to multiply examples. Not man only, but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight: "the hoary hawthorn," the "troop of grey plover," the "solitary curlew," all are dear to him; all live in this Earth along with him, and to all he is knit as in mysterious brotherhood. How touching is it, for instance, that, amidst the gloom of personal misery, brooding over the wintry desolation without him and within him, he thinks of the "ourie cattle" and "silly sheep," and their sufferings in the pitiless storm!

*I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' wintry war,
Or thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,
Beneath a scour.
Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing,
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Where wilt thou cow'r thy chattering wing,
And close thy ee?*

The tenant of the mean hut, with its "ragged roof and chinky wall," has a heart to pity even these! This is worth several homilies on Mercy; for it is the voice of Mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all realms of being; nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him. The very Devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy:

*But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben;
O, wad ye tak a thought and men'!
Ye aiblins might, — I dinna ken, —
Still hae a stake;
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Even for your sake!*

"*He* is the father of curses and lies," said Dr. Slop; "and is cursed and damned already." — "I am sorry for it," quoth my uncle Toby! — a Poet without Love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility.

But has it not been said, in contradiction to this principle that "Indignation makes verses"? It has been so said, and is true enough: but the contradiction is apparent, not real. The Indignation which makes verses is, properly speaking, an inverted Love; the love of some right, some worth, some goodness, belonging to ourselves or others, which has been injured, and which this tempestuous feeling issues forth to defend and avenge. No selfish fury of heart, existing there as a primary feeling, and without its opposite, ever produced much Poetry: otherwise, we suppose, the Tiger were the most musical of all our choristers. Johnson said, he loved a good hater; by which he must have meant, not so much one that hated violently, as one that hated wisely; hated baseness from love of nobleness. However, in spite of Johnson's paradox, tolerable enough for once in speech, but which need not have been so often adopted in print since then, we rather believe that good men deal sparingly in hatred, either wise or unwise: nay that a "good" hater is still a desideratum in this world. The Devil, at least, who passes for the chief and best of that class, is said to be nowise an amiable character.

Of the verses which Indignation makes, Burns has also given us specimens: and among the best that were ever given. Who will forget his "*Dweller in yon Dungeon Dark*"; a piece that might have been chanted by the Furies of Æschylus? The secrets of the infernal Pit are laid bare; a boundless baleful "darkness visible"; and streaks of hell-fire quivering madly in its black haggard bosom!

*Dweller in yon Dungeon dark,
Hangman of Creation, mark!
Who in widow's weeds appears,
Laden with unhonoured years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse!*

Why should we speak of *Scots wha hae w' Wallace bled*; since all know of it, from the king to the meanest of his subjects? This dithyrambic was composed on horseback; in riding in the middle of tempests, over the wildest Galloway moor, in company with a Mr. Syme, who, observing the poet's looks, forebore to speak, — judiciously enough, for a man composing *Bruce's Address* might be unsafe to trifle with. Doubtless this stern hymn was singing itself, as he formed it, through the soul of Burns: but to the external ear, it should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind. So long as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotchman or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war-ode; the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen.

Another wild stormful Song, that dwells in our ear and mind with a strange tenacity, is *Macpherson's Farewell*. Perhaps there is something in the tradition itself that coöperates. For was not this grim Celt, this shaggy Northland Cacus, that "lived a life of sturt and strife, and died by treacherie," — was not he too one of the Nimrods and Napoleons of the earth, in the arena of his own remote misty glens, for want of a clearer and wider one? Nay, was there not a touch of grace given him? A fibre of love and softness, of poetry itself, must have lived in his savage heart: for he composed that air the night before his execution; on the wings of that poor melody his better soul would soar away above oblivion, pain and all the ignominy and despair, which, like an avalanche, was hurling him to the abyss! Here also, as at Thebes, and in Pelops's line, was material Fate matched against man's Free-will; matched in bitterest though obscure duel; and the ethereal soul sank not, even in its blindness, without a cry which has survived it. But who, except Burns, could have given words to such a soul; words that we never listen to without a strange half-barbarous, half-poetic fellow-feeling?

*Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree.*

Under a lighter disguise, the same principle of Love, which we have recognized as the great characteristic of Burns, and of all true poets, occasionally manifests itself in the shape of Humour. Everywhere, indeed, in his sunny moods, a full buoyant flood of mirth rolls through the mind of Burns; he rises to the high, and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all Nature. We speak not of his bold and often irresistible faculty of caricature; for this is Drollery rather than Humour: but a much tenderer sportfulness dwells in him; and comes forth here and there, in evanescent and beautiful touches; as in his *Address to the Mouse*, or the *Farmer's Mare*, or in his *Elegy on poor Mailie*, which last may be reckoned his happiest effort of this kind. In these pieces there are traits of a Humour as fine as that of Sterne; yet altogether different, original, peculiar, — the Humour of Burns.

Of the tenderness, the playful pathos, and many other kindred qualities of Burns's Poetry, much more might be said; but now, with these poor outlines of a sketch, we must prepare to quit this part of our subject. To speak of his individual Writings, adequately and with any detail, would lead us far beyond our limits. As already hinted, we can look on but few of these pieces as, in strict critical language, deserving the name of Poems: they are rhymed eloquence, rhymed pathos, rhymed sense; yet seldom essentially melodious, aerial, poetical. *Tam o' Shanter* itself, which enjoys so high a favour, does not appear to us at all decisively to come under this

last category. It is not so much a poem, as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart and body of the story still lies hard and dead. He has not gone back, much less carried us back, into that dark, earnest, wondering age, when the tradition was believed, and when it took its rise; he does not attempt, by any new-modelling of his supernatural ware, to strike anew that deep mysterious chord of human nature, which once responded to such things; and which lives in us too, and will forever live, though silent now, or vibrating with far other notes, and to far different issues. Our German readers will understand us, when we say, that he is not the Tieck but the Musäus of this tale. Externally it is all green and living; yet look closer, it is no firm growth, but only ivy on a rock. The piece does not properly cohere: the strange chasm which yawns in our incredulous imaginations between the Ayr public-house and the gate of Tophet, is nowhere bridged over, nay the idea of such a bridge is laughed at; and thus the Tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-coloured spectrum painted on ale-vapours, and the Farce alone has any reality. We do not say that Burns should have made much more of this tradition; we rather think that, for strictly poetical purposes, not much *was* to be made of it. Neither are we blind to the deep, varied, genial power displayed in what he has actually accomplished; but we find far more "Shakespearean" qualities, as these of *Tam o' Shanter* have been fondly named, in many of his other pieces; nay we incline to believe that this latter might have been written, all but quite as well, by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent.

Perhaps we may venture to say, that the most strictly poetical of all his "poems" is one which does not appear in Currie's Edition; but has been often printed before and since, under the humble title of *The Jolly Beggars*. The subject truly is among the lowest in Nature; but it only the more shows our Poet's gift in raising it into the domain of Art. To our minds, this piece seems thoroughly compacted; melted together, refined; and poured forth in one flood of true *liquid* harmony. It is light, airy, soft of movement; yet sharp and precise in its details; every face is a portrait: that *raucle carlin*, that *wee Apollo*, that *Son of Mars*, are Scottish, yet ideal; the scene is at once a dream, and the very Ragcastle of "Poosie-Nansie." Farther, it seems in a considerable degree complete, a real self-supporting Whole, which is the highest merit in a poem. The blanket of the Night is drawn asunder for a moment; in full, ruddy, flaming light, these rough tatterdemalions are seen in their boisterous revel; for the strong pulse of Life vindicates its right to gladness even here; and when the curtain closes, we prolong the action, without effort; the next day as the last, our *Caird* and our *Balladmonger* are singing and soldiering; their "brats and callets" are hawking, begging, cheating; and some other night, in new combinations, they will wring from Fate another hour of wassail and good cheer. Apart from the universal sympathy with man which this

again bespeaks in Burns, a genuine inspiration and no inconsiderable technical talent are manifested here. There is the fidelity, humour, warm life and accurate painting and grouping of some Teniers, for whom hostlers and carousing peasants are not without significance. It would be strange, doubtless, to call this the best of Burns's writings: we mean to say only, that it seems to us the most perfect of its kind, as a piece of poetical composition, strictly so called. In the *Beggars' Opera*, in the *Beggars' Bush*, as other critics have already remarked, there is nothing which, in real poetic vigour, equals this *Cantata*; nothing, as we think, which comes within many degrees of it.

But by far the most finished, complete and truly inspired pieces of Burns are, without dispute, to be found among his *Songs*. It is here that, although through a small aperture, his light shines with least obstruction; in its highest beauty and pure sunny clearness. The reason may be, that Song is a brief simple species of composition; and requires nothing so much for its perfection as genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart. Yet the Song has its rules equally with the Tragedy; rules which in most cases are poorly fulfilled, in many cases are not so much as felt. We might write a long essay on the Songs of Burns; which we reckon by far the best that Britain has yet produced: for indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know not that, by any other hand, aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. True, we have songs enough "by persons of quality;" we have tawdry, hollow, wine-bred madrigals; many a rhymed speech "in the flowing and watery vein of Ossorius the Portugal Bishop," rich in sonorous words, and, for moral, dashed perhaps with some tint of a sentimental sensuality; all which many persons cease not from endeavouring to sing; though for most part, we fear, the music is but from the throat outwards, or at best from some region far enough short of the *Soul*; not in which, but in a certain inane Limbo of the Fancy, or even in some vaporous debatable-land on the outskirts of the Nervous System, most of such madrigals and rhymed speeches seem to have originated.

With the Songs of Burns we must not name these things. Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades *his* poetry, his Songs are honest in another point of view: in form, as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of Harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested; not *said*, or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence; but *sung*, in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings* not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song; and that no songs since the little careless catches, and as it were drops

of song, which Shakespeare has here and there sprinkled over his Plays, fulfil this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. Such grace and truth of external movement, too, presupposes in general a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The Songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings, yet with what vehemence and entireness! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or slickest mirth; and yet he is sweet and soft, "sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet, and soft as their parting tear." If we farther take into account the immense variety of his subjects; how, from the loud flowing revel in *Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut*, to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness for *Mary in Heaven*; from the glad kind greeting of *Auld Langsyne*, or the comic archness of *Duncan Gray*, to the fire-eyed fury of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart, — it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our Song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

It is on his Songs, as we believe, that Burns's chief influence as an author will ultimately be found to depend: nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism is true, shall we account this a small influence. "Let me make the songs of a people," said he, "and you shall make its laws." Surely, if ever any Poet might have equalled himself with Legislators on this ground, it was Burns. His Songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only but of Britain, and of the millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-coloured joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice* of that joy and that woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men, as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

In another point of view, moreover, we incline to think that Burns's influence may have been considerable: we mean, as exerted specially on the Literature of his country, at least on the Literature of Scotland. Among the great changes which British, particularly Scottish literature, has undergone since that period, one of the greatest will be found to consist in its remarkable increase of nationality. Even the English writers, most popular in Burns's time, were little distinguished for their literary patriotism, in this its best sense. A certain attenuated cosmopolitanism had, in good measure, taken place of the old insular home-feeling; literature was, as it were, without any local environment; was not nourished by the affections which spring from a native soil. Our Grays and Glovers seemed to write almost as if *in vacuo*; the thing written bears no mark of place; it is not written so much for Englishmen, as for men; or rather, which is the inevitable result of this, for certain Generalizations which philosophy

termed men. Goldsmith is an exception: not so Johnson; the scene of his *Rambler* is little more English than that of his *Rasselas*.

But if such was, in some degree, the case with England, it was, in the highest degree, the case with Scotland. In fact, our Scottish literature had, at that period, a very singular aspect; unexampled, so far as we know, except perhaps at Geneva, where the same state of matters appears still to continue. For a long period after Scotland became British, we had no literature: at the date when Addison and Steele were writing their *Spectators*, our good John Boston was writing, with the noblest intent, but alike in defiance of grammar and philosophy, his *Fourfold State of Man*. Then came the schisms in our National Church, and the fiercer schisms in our Body Politic: Theologic ink, and Jacobite blood, with gall enough in both cases, seemed to have blotted out the intellect of the country: however, it was only obscured, not obliterated. Lord Kames made nearly the first attempt at writing English; and ere long, Hume, Robertson, Smith, and a whole host of followers, attracted hither the eyes of all Europe. And yet in this brilliant resuscitation of our "fervid genius," there was nothing truly Scottish, nothing indigenous; except, perhaps, the natural impetuosity of intellect, which we sometimes claim, and are sometimes upbraided with, as a characteristic of our nation. It is curious to remark that Scotland, so full of writers, had no Scottish culture, nor indeed any English; our culture was almost exclusively French. It was by studying Racine and Voltaire, Batteux and Boileau, that Kames had trained himself to be a critic and philosopher; it was the light of Montesquieu and Mably that guided Robertson in his political speculations; Quesnay's lamp that kindled the lamp of Adam Smith. Hume was too rich a man to borrow; and perhaps he reacted on the French more than he was acted on by them: but neither had he aught to do with Scotland; Edinburgh, equally with La Flèche, was but the lodging and laboratory, in which he not so much morally *lived*, as metaphysically *investigated*. Never, perhaps, was there a class of writers so clear and well-ordered, yet so totally destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay of any human affection whatever. The French wits of the period were as unpatriotic: but their general deficiency in moral principle, not to say their avowed sensuality and unbelief in all virtue, strictly so called, render this accountable enough. We hope, there is a patriotism founded on something better than prejudice; that our country may be dear to us, without injury to our philosophy; that in loving and justly prizing all other lands, we may prize justly, and yet love before all others, our own stern Motherland, and the venerable Structure of social and moral Life, which Mind has through long ages been building up for us there. Surely there is nourishment for the better part of man's heart in all this: surely the roots, that have fixed themselves in the very core of man's being, may be so cultivated as to grow up not into briars, but into roses, in the field of his life!

Our Scottish sages have no such propensities: the field of their life shows neither briars nor roses; but only a flat, continuous thrashing-floor for Logic, whereon all questions, from the "Doctrine of Rent" to the "Natural History of Religion," are thrashed and sifted with the same mechanical impartiality!

With Sir Walter Scott at the head of our literature, it cannot be denied that much of this evil is past, or rapidly passing away: our chief literary men, whatever other faults they may have, no longer live among us like a French Colony, or some knot of Propaganda Missionaries; but like natural-born subjects of the soil, partaking and sympathizing in all our attachments, humours and habits. Our literature no longer grows in water but in mould, and with the true racy virtues of the soil and climate. How much of this change may be due to Burns, or to any other individual, it might be difficult to estimate. Direct literary imitation of Burns was not to be looked for. But his example, in the fearless adoption of domestic subjects, could not but operate from afar; and certainly in no heart did the love of country ever burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns: "a tide of Scottish prejudice," as he modestly calls this deep and generous feeling, "had been poured along his veins; and he felt that it would boil there till the flood-gates shut in eternal rest." It seemed to him, as if *he* could do so little for his country, and yet would so gladly have done all. One small province stood open for him, — that of Scottish Song; and how eagerly he entered on it, how devotedly he laboured there! In his toilsome journeyings, this object never quits him; it is the little happy-valley of his care-worn heart. In the gloom of his own affliction, he eagerly searches after some lonely brother of the muse, and rejoices to snatch one other name from the oblivion that was covering it! These were early feelings, and they abode with him to the end:

*. . . A wish (I mind its power),
A wish, that to my latest hour
Will strongly heave my breast, —
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.*

*The rough bur Thistle spreading wide
Among the bearded bear,
I turn'd my weeding-clips aside,
And spared the symbol dear.*

But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones: the Life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow-men. These Poems are but like little rhymed frag-

ments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed Romance of his earthly existence; and it is only when intercalated in this at their proper places, that they attain their full measure of significance. And this, too, alas, was but a fragment! The plan of a mighty edifice had been sketched; some columns, porticos, firm masses of building, stand completed; the rest more or less clearly indicated; with many a far-stretching tendency, which only studious and friendly eyes can now trace towards the purposed termination. For the work is broken off in the middle, almost in the beginning; and rises among us, beautiful and sad, at once unfinished and a ruin! If charitable judgment was necessary in estimating his Poems, and justice required that the aim and the manifest power to fulfil it must often be accepted for the fulfilment; much more is this the case in regard to his Life, the sum and result of all his endeavours, where his difficulties came upon him not in detail only, but in mass; and so much has been left unaccomplished, nay was mistaken, and altogether marred.

Properly speaking, there is but one era in the life of Burns, and that the earliest. We have not youth and manhood, but only youth: for, to the end, we discern no decisive change in the complexion of his character; in his thirty-seventh year, he is still, as it were, in youth. With all that resoluteness of judgment, that penetrating insight, and singular maturity of intellectual power, exhibited in his writings, he never attains to any clearness regarding himself; to the last, he never ascertains his peculiar aim, even with such distinctness as is common among ordinary men; and therefore never can pursue it with that singleness of will, which insures success and some contentment to such men. To the last, he wavers between two purposes: glorying in his talent, like a true poet, he yet cannot consent to make this his chief and sole glory, and to follow it as the one thing needful, through poverty or riches, through good or evil report. Another far meaner ambition still cleaves to him; he must dream and struggle about a certain "Rock of Independance"; which, natural and even admirable as it might be, was still but a warring with the world, on the comparatively insignificant ground of his being more completely or less completely supplied with money than others; of his standing at a higher or at a lower altitude in general estimation than others. For the world still appears to him, as to the young, in borrowed colours: he expects from it what it cannot give to any man; seeks for contentment, not within himself, in action and wise effort, but from without, in the kindness of circumstances, in love, friendship, honour, pecuniary ease. He would be happy, not actively and in himself, but passively and from some ideal cornucopia of Enjoyments, not earned by his own labour, but showered on him by the beneficence of Destiny. Thus, like a young man, he cannot gird himself up for any worthy well-calculated goal, but swerves to and fro, between passionate hope and remorseful disappointment: rushing onwards with a deep tempestuous force, he surmounts or breaks asunder many a barrier; trav-

els, nay advances far, but advancing only under uncertain guidance, is ever and anon turned from his path; and to the last cannot reach the only true happiness of a man, that of clear decided Activity in the sphere for which, by nature and circumstances, he has been fitted and appointed.

We do not say these things in dispraise of Burns; nay, perhaps, they but interest us the more in his favour. This blessing is not given soonest to the best; but rather, it is often the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it; for where most is to be developed, most time may be required to develop it. A complex condition had been assigned him from without; as complex a condition from within: no "preëstablished harmony" existed between the clay soil of Mossgiel and the empyrean soul of Robert Burns; it was not wonderful that the adjustment between them should have been long postponed, and his arm long cumbered, and his sight confused, in so vast and discordant an economy as he had been appointed steward over. Byron was, at his death, but a year younger than Burns; and through life, as it might have appeared, far more simply situated: yet in him too we can trace no such adjustment, no such moral manhood; but at best, and only a little before his end, the beginning of what seemed such.

By much the most striking incident in Burns's Life is his journey to Edinburgh; but perhaps a still more important one is his residence at Irvine, so early as in his twenty-third year. Hitherto his life had been poor and toilworn; but otherwise not ungenial, and, with all its distresses, by no means unhappy. In his parentage, deducting outward circumstances, he had every reason to reckon himself fortunate. His father was a man of thoughtful, intense, earnest character, as the best of our peasants are; valuing knowledge, possessing some, and, what is far better and rarer, open-minded for more: a man with a keen insight and devout heart; reverent towards God, friendly therefore at once, and fearless towards all that God has made: in one word, though but a hard-handed peasant, a complete and fully unfolded *Man*. Such a father is seldom found in any rank in society; and was worth descending far in society to seek. Unfortunately, he was very poor; had he been even a little richer, almost never so little, the whole might have issued far otherwise. Mighty events turn on a straw; the crossing of a brook decides the conquest of the world. Had this William Burns's small seven acres of nursery-ground anyway prospered, the boy Robert had been sent to school; had struggled forward, as so many weaker men do, to some university; come forth not as a rustic wonder, but as a regular well-trained intellectual workman, and changed the whole course of British Literature, — for it lay in him to have done this! But the nursery did not prosper; poverty sank his whole family below the help of even our cheap school-system: Burns remained a hard-worked ploughboy, and British literature took its own course. Nevertheless, even in this rugged scene there is much to nourish

him. If he drudges, it is with his brother, and for his father and mother, whom he loves, and would fain shield from want. Wisdom is not banished from their poor hearth, nor the balm of natural feeling: the solemn words, *Let us Worship God*, are heard there from a "priest-like father"; if threatenings of unjust men throw mother and children into tears, these are tears not of grief only, but of holiest affection; every heart in that humble group feels itself the closer knit to every other; in their hard warfare they are there together, a "little band of brethren." Neither are such tears, and the deep beauty that dwells in them, their only portion. Light visits the hearts as it does the eyes of all living: there is a force, too, in this youth, that enables him to trample on misfortune; nay to bind it under his feet to make him sport. For a bold, warm, buoyant humour of character has been given him; and so the thick-coming shapes of evil are welcomed with a gay, friendly irony, and in their closest pressure he bates no jot of heart or hope. Vague yearnings of ambition fail not, as he grows up; dreamy fancies hang like cloud-cities around him; the curtain of Existence is slowly rising, in many-coloured splendour and gloom: and the auroral light of first love is gilding his horizon, and the music of song is on his path; and so he walks

. in glory and in joy,
Behind his plough, upon the mountain side.

We ourselves know, from the best evidence, that up to this date Burns was happy; nay that he was the gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being to be found in the world; more so even than he ever afterwards appeared. But now, at this early age, he quits the paternal roof; goes forth into looser, louder, more exciting society; and becomes initiated in those dissipations, those vices, which a certain class of philosophers have asserted to be a natural preparative for entering on active life; a kind of mud-bath, in which the youth is, as it were, necessitated to steep, and, we suppose, cleanse himself, before the real toga of Manhood can be laid on him. We shall not dispute much with this class of philosophers; we hope they are mistaken: for Sin and Remorse so easily beset us at all stages of life, and are always such indifferent company, that it seems hard we should, at any stage, be forced and fated not only to meet but to yield to them, and even serve for a term in their leprous armada. We hope it is not so. Clear we are, at all events, it cannot be the training one receives in this Devil's service, but only our determining to desert from it, that fits us for true manly Action. We become men, not after we have been dissipated, and disappointed in the chase of false pleasure; but after we have ascertained, in any way, what impassable barriers hem us in through this life; how mad it is to hope for contentment to our infinite soul from the *gifts* of this extremely finite world; that a man must be sufficient for himself; and that for suffering and enduring there is no remedy but striving

and doing. Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins even when we have surrendered to Necessity, as the most part only do; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity; and thus, in reality, triumphed over it, and felt that in Necessity we are free. Surely, such lessons as this last, which, in one shape or other, is the grand lesson for every mortal man, are better learned from the lips of a devout mother, in the looks and actions of a devout father, while the heart is yet soft and pliant, than in collision with the sharp adamant of Fate, attracting us to shipwreck us, when the heart is grown hard, and may be broken before it will become contrite. Had Burns continued to learn this, as he was already learning it, in his father's cottage, he would have learned it fully, which he never did; and been saved many a lasting aberration, many a bitter hour and year of remorseful sorrow.

It seems to us another circumstance of fatal import in Burns's history, that at this time too he became involved in the religious quarrels of his district; that he was enlisted and feasted, as the fighting man of the New-Light Priesthood, in their highly unprofitable warfare. At the tables of these free-minded clergy he learned much more than was needful for him. Such liberal ridicule of fanaticism awakened in his mind scruples about Religion itself; and a whole world of Doubts, which it required quite another set of conjurors than these men to exorcise. We do not say that such an intellect as his could have escaped similar doubts at some period of his history; or even that he could, at a later period, have come through them altogether victorious and unharmed: but it seems peculiarly unfortunate that this time, above all others, should have been fixed for the encounter. For now, with principles assailed by evil example from without, by "passions raging like demons" from within, he had little need of sceptical misgivings to whisper treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there; but wild Desires and wild Repentance alternately oppress him. Ere long, too, he has committed himself before the world; his character for sobriety, dear to a Scottish peasant as few corrupted worldlings can even conceive, is destroyed in the eyes of men; and his only refuge consists in trying to disbelieve his guiltiness, and is but a refuge of lies. The blackest desperation now gathers over him, broken only by red lightnings of remorse. The whole fabric of his life is blasted asunder; for now not only his character, but his personal liberty, is to be lost; men and Fortune are leagued for his hurt; "hungry Ruin has him in the wind." He sees no escape but the saddest of all: exile from his loved country, to a country in every sense inhospitable and abhorrent to him. While the "gloomy night is gathering fast," in mental storm and solitude, as well as in physical, he sings his wild farewell to Scotland:

*Farewell my friends; farewell my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those:
The bursting tears my heart declare;
Adieu, my native banks of Ayr!*

Light breaks suddenly in on him in floods; but still a false transitory light, and no real sunshine. He is invited to Edinburgh; hastens thither with anticipating heart; is welcomed as in a triumph, and with universal blandishment and acclamation; whatever is wisest, whatever is greatest or loveliest there, gathers round him, to gaze on his face, to show him honour, sympathy, affection. Burns's appearance among the sages and nobles of Edinburgh must be regarded as one of the most singular phenomena in modern Literature; almost like the appearance of some Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of modern Politics. For it is nowise as "a mockery king," set there by favour, transiently and for a purpose, that he will let himself be treated; still less is he a mad Rienzi, whose sudden elevation turns his too weak head: but he stands there on his own basis; cool, unastonished, holding his equal rank from Nature herself; putting forth no claim which there is not strength *in* him, as well as about him, to vindicate. Mr. Lockhart has some forcible observations on this point:

"It needs no effort of imagination," says he, "to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation a most thorough conviction, that in the society of the most eminent men of his nation he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bon mots* of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble, — nay, to tremble visibly, — beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and last, and probably worst of all, who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit, in all likelihood still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom

he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had ere long no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves."

The farther we remove from this scene, the more singular will it seem to us: details of the exterior aspect of it are already full of interest. Most readers recollect Mr. Walker's personal interviews with Burns as among the best passages of his Narrative: a time will come when this reminiscence of Sir Walter Scott's, slight though it is, will also be precious:

"As for Burns," writes Sir Walter, "I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him: but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner; but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remembered which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side, — on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath:

*'Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptized in tears.'*

"Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather by the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were; and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's called by the unpromising title of 'The Justice of Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present; he mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

"His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture: but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his counte-

nance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I should have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, *i.e.*, none of your modern agriculturalists who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudemán* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh: but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

"I remember, on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited; and also that, having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models: there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate.

"This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem*, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station or information more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this. — I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since."

The conduct of Burns under this dazzling blaze of favour; the calm, unaffected, manly manner in which he not only bore it, but estimated its value, has justly been regarded as the best proof that could be given of his real vigour and integrity of mind. A little natural vanity, some touches of hypocritical modesty, some glimmerings of affectation, at least some fear of being thought affected, we could have pardoned in almost any man; but no such indication is to be traced here. In his unexampled situation the young peasant is not a moment perplexed; so many strange lights do not confuse him, do not lead him astray. Nevertheless, we cannot but perceive that this winter did him great and lasting injury. A somewhat

clearer knowledge of men's affairs, scarcely of their characters, it did afford him; but a sharper feeling of Fortune's unequal arrangements in their social destiny it also left with him. He had seen the gay and gorgeous arena, in which the powerful are born to play their parts; nay had himself stood in the midst of it; and he felt more bitterly than ever, that here he was but a looker-on, and had no part or lot in that splendid game. From this time a jealous indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him; and perverts, so far as aught could pervert, his private contentment, and his feelings towards his richer fellows. It was clear to Burns that he had talent enough to make a fortune, or a hundred fortunes, could he but have rightly willed this; it was clear also that he willed something far different, and therefore could not make one. Unhappy it was that he had not power to choose the one, and reject the other; but must halt forever between two opinions, two objects; making hampered advancement towards either. But so is it with many men: we "long for the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price"; and so stand chaffering with Fate, in vexatious altercation, till the night come, and our fair is over!

The Edinburgh Learned of that period were in general more noted for clearness of head than for warmth of heart: with the exception of the good old Blacklock, whose help was too ineffectual, scarcely one among them seems to have looked at Burns with any true sympathy, or indeed much otherwise than as at a highly curious *thing*. By the great also he is treated in the customary fashion; entertained at their tables and dismissed: certain modica of pudding and praise are, from time to time, gladly exchanged for the fascination of his presence; which exchange once effected, the bargain is finished, and each party goes his several way. At the end of this strange season, Burns gloomily sums up his gains and losses, and meditates on the chaotic future. In money he is somewhat richer; in fame and the show of happiness, infinitely richer; but in the substance of it, as poor as ever. Nay poorer; for his heart is now maddened still more with the fever of worldly Ambition; and through long years the disease will rack him with unprofitable sufferings, and weaken his strength for all true and nobler aims.

What Burns was next to do or to avoid; how a man so circumstanced was now to guide himself towards his true advantage, might at this point of time have been a question for the wisest. It was a question too, which apparently he was left altogether to answer for himself: of his learned or rich patrons it had not struck any individual to turn a thought on this so trivial matter. Without claiming for Burns the praise of perfect sagacity, we must say, that his Excise and Farm scheme does not seem to us a very unreasonable one; that we should be at a loss, even now, to suggest one decidedly better. Certain of his admirers have felt scandalized at his ever resolving to *gauge*; and would have had him lie at the pool, till the

spirit of Patronage stirred the waters, that so, with one friendly plunge, all his sorrows might be healed. Unwise counsellors! They know not the manner of this spirit; and how, in the lap of most golden dreams, a man might have happiness, were it not that in the interim he must die of hunger! It reflects credit on the manliness and sound sense of Burns, that he felt so early on what ground he was standing; and preferred self-help, on the humblest scale, to dependence and inaction, though with hope of far more splendid possibilities. But even these possibilities were not rejected in his scheme: he might expect, if it chanced that he *had* any friend, to rise, in no long period, into something even like opulence and leisure; while again, if it chanced that he had no friend, he could still live in security; and for the rest, he "did not intend to borrow honour from any profession." We reckon that his plan was honest and well-calculated: all turned on the execution of it. Doubtless it failed; yet not, we believe, from any vice inherent in itself. Nay, after all, it was no failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. His was no bankruptcy of the purse, but of the soul; to his last day, he owed no man anything.

Meanwhile he begins well: with two good and wise actions. His donation to his mother, munificent from a man whose income had lately been seven pounds a-year, was worthy of him, and not more than worthy. Generous also, and worthy of him, was the treatment of the woman whose life's welfare now depended on his pleasure. A friendly observer might have hoped serene days for him: his mind is on the true road to peace with itself: what clearness he still wants will be given as he proceeds; for the best teacher of duties, that still lie dim to us, is the Practice of those we see and have at hand. Had the "patrons of genius," who could give him nothing, but taken nothing from him, at least nothing more! The wounds of his heart would have healed, vulgar ambition would have died away. Toil and Frugality would have been welcome, since Virtue dwelt with them; and Poetry would have shone through them as of old: and in her clear ethereal light, which was his own by birthright, he might have looked down on his earthly destiny, and all its obstructions, not with patience only, but with love.

But the patrons of genius would not have it so. Picturesque tourists, all manner of fashionable dangles after literature, and, far worse, all manner of convivial Mæcenases, hovered round him in his retreat; and his good as well as his weak qualities secured them influence over him. He was flattered by their notice; and his warm social nature made it impossible for him to shake them off, and hold on his way apart from them. These men, as we believe, were approximately the means of his ruin. Not that they meant him any ill; they only meant themselves a little good; if he suffered harm, let *him* look to it! But they wasted his precious time and his precious talent; they disturbed his composure, broke down his returning habits of temperance and assiduous contented exertion. Their

pampering was baneful to him; their cruelty, which soon followed, was equally baneful. The old grudge against Fortune's inequality awoke with new bitterness in their neighbourhood; and Burns had no retreat but to "the Rock of Independence," which is but an air-castle after all, that looks well at a distance, but will screen no one from real wind and wet. Flushed with irregular excitement, exasperated alternately by contempt of others, and contempt of himself, Burns was no longer regaining his peace of mind, but fast losing it forever. There was a hollowness at the heart of his life, for his conscience did not now approve what he was doing.

Amid the vapours of unwise enjoyment, of bootless remorse, and angry discontent with Fate, his true lodestar, a life of Poetry, with Poverty, nay with Famine if it must be so, was too often altogether hidden from his eyes. And yet he sailed a sea, where without some such lodestar there was no right steering. Meteors of French Politics rise before him, but these were not *his* stars. An accident this, which hastened, but did not originate, his worst distresses. In the mad contentions of that time, he comes in collision with certain official Superiors; is wounded by them; cruelly lacerated, we should say, could a dead mechanical implement, in any case, be called cruel: and shrinks, in indignant pain, into deeper self-seclusion, into gloomier moodiness than ever. His life has now lost its unity: it is a life of fragments; led with little aim, beyond the melancholy one of securing its own continuance, — in fits of wild false joy when such offered, and of black despondency when they passed away. His character before the world begins to suffer: calumny is busy with him; for a miserable man makes more enemies than friends. Some faults he has fallen into, and a thousand misfortunes; but deep criminality is what he stands accused of, and they that are *not* without sin cast the first stone at him! For is he not a well-wisher to the French Revolution, a Jacobin, and therefore in that one act guilty of all? These accusations, political and moral, it has since appeared, were false enough: but the world hesitated little to credit them. Nay his convivial Mæcenases themselves were not the last to do it. There is reason to believe that, in his later years, the Dumfries Aristocracy had partly withdrawn themselves from Burns, as from a tainted person, no longer worthy of their acquaintance. That painful class, stationed, in all provincial cities, behind the outmost breastwork of Gentility, there to stand siege and do battle against the intrusions of Grocerdom and Grazierdom, had actually seen dishonour in the society of Burns, and branded him with their veto; had, as we vulgarly say, *cut* him! We find one passage in this Work of Mr. Lockhart's, which will not out of our thoughts:

"A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has often told me that he was seldom more grieved, than when riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening about

this time to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognize him. The horseman dismounted, and joined Burns, who on his proposing to cross the street said: 'Nay, nay, my young friend, that's all over now'; and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad:

*'His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he lets 't wear ony way it will hing,
And casts himsell dowie upon the corn-bing.*

*O, were we young as we ance hae been,
We sud hae been galloping down on yon green,
And linking it ower the lily-white lea!
And werena my heart light, I wad die.'*

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after reciting these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably till the hour of the ball arrived."

Alas! when we think that Burns now sleeps "where bitter indignation can no longer lacerate his heart," and that most of those fair dames and frizzled gentlemen already lie at his side, where the breastwork of gentility is quite thrown down, — who would not sigh over the thin delusions and foolish toys that divide heart from heart, and make man unmerciful to his brother!

It was not now to be hoped that the genius of Burns would ever reach maturity, or accomplish aught worthy of itself. His spirit was jarred in its melody; not the soft breath of natural feeling, but the rude hand of Fate, was now sweeping over the strings. And yet what harmony was in him, what music even in his discords! How the wild tones had a charm for the simplest and the wisest; and all men felt and knew that here also was one of the Gifted! "If he entered an inn at midnight, after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled!" Some brief pure moments of poetic life were yet appointed him, in the composition of his Songs. We can understand how he grasped at this employment; and how too, he spurned all other reward for it but what the labour itself brought him. For the soul of Burns, though scathed and marred, was yet living in its full moral strength, though sharply conscious of its errors and abasement: and here, in his destitution

and degradation, was one act of seeming nobleness and self-devotedness left even for him to perform. He felt too, that with all the "thoughtless follies" that had "laid him low," the world was unjust and cruel to him; and he silently appealed to another and calmer time. Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country: so he cast from him the poor sixpence a-day, and served zealously as a volunteer. Let us not grudge him this last luxury of his existence; let him not have appealed to us in vain! The money was not necessary to him; he struggled through without it: long since, these guineas would have been gone, and now the high-mindedness of refusing them will plead for him in all hearts forever.

We are here arrived at the crisis of Burns's life; for matters had now taken such a shape with him as could not long continue. If improvement was not to be looked for, Nature could only for a limited time maintain this dark and maddening warfare against the world and itself. We are not medically informed whether any continuance of years was, at this period, probable for Burns; whether his death is to be looked on as in some sense an accidental event, or only as the natural consequence of the long series of events that had preceded. The latter seems to be the likelier opinion; and yet it is by no means a certain one. At all events, as we have said, *some* change could not be very distant. Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open for Burns: clear poetical activity; madness; or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable; for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it: and yet Burns had an iron resolution; could he but have seen and felt, that not only his highest glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes, lay here. The second was still less probable; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him: and he passed, not softly yet speedily, into that still country, where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!

Contemplating this sad end of Burns, and how he sank unaided by any real help, uncheered by any wise sympathy, generous minds have sometimes figured to themselves, with a reproachful sorrow, that much might have been done for him; that by counsel, true affection and friendly ministrations, he might have been saved to himself and the world. We question whether there is not more tenderness of heart than soundness of judgment in these suggestions. It seems dubious to us whether the richest, wisest, most benevolent individual could have lent Burns any effectual help. Counsel, which seldom profits anyone, he did not need; in his understanding, he knew the right from the wrong, as well perhaps as any man ever did; but the persuasion, which would have availed him, lies not so much in the head as in the heart, where no argument or expostulation

could have assisted much to implant it. As to money again, we do not believe that this was his essential want; or well see how any private man could, even presupposing Burns's consent, have bestowed on him an independent fortune, with much prospect of decisive advantage. It is a mortifying truth, that two men in any rank of society, could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact: Friendship, in the old heroic sense of that term, no longer exists; except in the cases of kindred or other legal affinity, it is in reality no longer expected, or recognized as a virtue among men. A close observer of manners has pronounced "Patronage," that is, pecuniary or other economic furtherance, to be "twice cursed"; cursing him that gives, and him that takes! And thus, in regard to outward matters also, it has become the rule, as in regard to inward it always was and must be the rule, that no one shall look for effectual help to another; but that each shall rest contented with what help he can afford himself. Such, we say, is the principle of modern Honour; naturally enough growing out of that sentiment of Pride, which we inculcate and encourage as the basis of our whole social morality. Many a poet has been poorer than Burns; but no one was ever prouder: we may question whether, without great precautions, even a pension from Royalty would not have galled and encumbered, more than actually assisted him.

Still less, therefore, are we disposed to join with another class of Burns's admirers, who accuse the higher ranks among us of having ruined Burns by their selfish neglect of him. We have already stated our doubts whether direct pecuniary help, had it been offered, would have been accepted, or could have proved very effectual. We shall readily admit, however, that much was to be done for Burns; that many a poisoned arrow might have been warded from his bosom; many an entanglement in his path cut asunder by the hand of the powerful; and light and heat, shed on him from high places, would have made his humble atmosphere more genial; and the softest heart then breathing might have lived and died with some fewer pangs. Nay, we shall grant farther, and for Burns it is granting much, that, with all his pride, he would have thanked, even with exaggerated gratitude, anyone who had cordially befriended him: patronage, unless once cursed, needed not to have been twice so. At all events, the poor promotion he desired in his calling might have been granted: it was his own scheme, therefore likelier than any other to be of service. All this it might have been a luxury, nay it was a duty, for our nobility to have done. No part of all this, however, did any of them do; or apparently attempt, or wish to do: so much is granted against them. But what then is the amount of their blame? Simply that they were men of the world, and walked by the principles of such men; that they treated Burns, as other nobles and other commoners had done other poets; as the English

did Shakespeare; as King Charles and his Cavaliers did Butler, as King Philip and his Grandees did Cervantes. Do men gather grapes of thorns; or shall we cut down our thorns for yielding only a *fence* and haws? How, indeed, could the "nobility and gentry of his native land" hold out any help to this "Scottish Bard, proud of his name and country"? Were the nobility and gentry so much as able rightly to help themselves? Had they not their game to preserve; their borough interests to strengthen; dinners, therefore, of various kinds to eat and give? Were their means more than adequate to all this business, or less than adequate? Less than adequate, in general; few of them in reality were richer than Burns; many of them were poorer; for sometimes they had to wring their supplies, as with thumb-screws, from the hard hand; and, in their need of guineas, to forget their duty of mercy; which Burns was never reduced to do. Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the *little* Babylons they severally builded by the glory of their might, are all melted or melting back into the primeval Chaos, as man's merely selfish endeavours are fated to do: and here was an action, extending, in virtue of its worldly influence, we may say, through all time; in virtue of its moral nature, beyond all time, being immortal as the Spirit of Goodness itself; this action was offered them to do, and light was not given them to do it. Let us pity and forgive them. But better than pity, let us go and *do otherwise*. Human suffering did not end with the life of Burns; neither was the solemn mandate, "Love one another, bear one another's burdens," given to the rich only, but to all men. True, we shall find no Burns to relieve, to assuage by our aid or our pity; but celestial natures, groaning under the fardels of a weary life, we shall still find; and that wretchedness which Fate has rendered *voiceless* and *tuneless* is not the least wretched, but the most.

Still, we do not think that the blame of Burns's failure lies chiefly with the world. The world, it seems to us, treated him with more rather than with less kindness than it usually shows to such men. It has ever, we fear, shown but small favour to its Teachers: hunger and nakedness, perils and revilings, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice have, in most times and countries, been the market-price it has offered for Wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify it. Homer and Socrates, and the Christian Apostles, belong to old days; but the world's Martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon and Galileo languish in priestly dungeons; Tasso pines in the cell of a madhouse; Camoens dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so "persecuted they the Prophets," not in Judea only, but in all places where men have been. We reckon that every poet of Burns's order is, or should be, a prophet and teacher to his age; that he has no right to expect great kindness from it, but rather is bound to do it great

kindness; that Burns, in particular, experienced fully the usual proportion of the world's goodness; and that the blame of his failure, as we have said, lies not chiefly with the world.

Where, then, does it lie? We are forced to answer: With himself; it is his inward, not his outward misfortunes that bring him to the dust. Seldom, indeed, is it otherwise; seldom is a life morally wrecked but the grand cause lies in some internal mal-arrangement, some want less of good fortune than of good guidance. Nature fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration; least of all does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul. Neither can we believe that it is in the power of *any* external circumstances utterly to ruin the mind of a man; nay if proper wisdom be given him, even so much as to affect its essential health and beauty. The sternest sum-total of all worldly misfortunes is Death; nothing more *can* lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men, in all ages, have triumphed over Death, and led it captive; converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, into a seal and immortal consecration for all that their past life had achieved. What has been done, may be done again: nay, it is but the degree and not the kind of such heroism that differs in different seasons; for without some portion of this spirit, not of boisterous daring, but of silent fearlessness, of Self-denial in all its forms, no good man, in any scene or time, has ever attained to be good.

We have already stated the error of Burns; and mourned over it, rather than blamed it. It was the want of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims; the hapless attempt to mingle in friendly union the common spirit of the world with the spirit of poetry, which is of a far different and altogether irreconcilable nature. Burns was nothing wholly, and Burns could be nothing, no man formed as he was can be anything, by halves. The heart, not of a mere hot-blooded, popular Verse-monger, or poetical *Restaurateur*, but of a true Poet and Singer, worthy of the old religious heroic times, had been given him: and he fell in an age, not of heroism and religion, but of scepticism, selfishness and triviality, when true Nobleness was little understood, and its place supplied by a hollow, dissocial, altogether barren and unfruitful principle of Pride. The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually difficult for him to cast aside, or rightly subordinate; the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy: he spent his life in endeavouring to reconcile these two; and lost it, as he must lose it, without reconciling them.

Burns was born poor; and born also to continue poor, for he would not endeavour to be otherwise: thus it had been well could he have once for all admitted, and considered as finally settled. He was poor, truly; but hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer,

yet have suffered nothing deadly from it: nay, his own Father had a far sorer battle with ungrateful destiny than his was; and he did not yield to it, but died courageously warring, and to all moral intents prevailing, against it. True, Burns had little means, had even little time for poetry, his only real pursuit and vocation; but so much the more precious was what little he had. In all these external respects his case was hard; but very far from the hardest. Poverty, incessant drudgery and much worse evils, it has often been the lot of Poets and wise men to strive with, and their glory to conquer. Locke was banished as a traitor; and wrote his *Essay on the Human Understanding* sheltering himself in a Dutch garret. Was Milton rich or at his ease when he composed *Paradise Lost*? Not only low, but fallen from a height; not only poor, but impoverished; in darkness and with dangers compassed round, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience, though few. Did not Cervantes finish his work, a maimed soldier and in prison? Nay, was not the *Araucana*, which Spain acknowledges as its Epic, written without even the aid of paper; on scraps of leather, as the stout fighter and voyager snatched any moment from that wild warfare?

And what, then, had these men, which Burns wanted? Two things; both which, it seems to us, are indispensable for such men. They had a true, religious principle of morals; and a single, not a double aim in their activity. They were not self-seekers and self-worshippers; but seekers and worshippers of something far better than Self. Not personal enjoyment was their object; but a high, heroic idea of Religion, of Patriotism, of heavenly Wisdom, in one or the other form, ever hovered before them; in which cause they neither shrank from suffering, nor called on the earth to witness it as something wonderful; but patiently endured, counting it blessedness enough so to spend and be spent. Thus the "golden-calf of Self-love," however curiously carved, was not their Deity; but the Invisible Goodness, which alone is man's reasonable service. This feeling was as a celestial fountain, whose streams refreshed into gladness and beauty all the provinces of their otherwise too desolate existence. In a word, they willed one thing, to which all other things were subordinated and made subservient; and therefore they accomplished it. The wedge will rend rocks; but its edge must be sharp and single: if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces and will rend nothing.

Part of this superiority these men owed to their age; in which heroism and devotedness were still practised, or at least not yet disbelieved in: but much of it likewise they owed to themselves. With Burns, again, it was different. His morality, in most of its practical points, is that of a mere worldly man; enjoyment, in a finer or coarser shape, is the only thing he longs and strives for. A noble instinct sometimes raises him above this; but an instinct only, and acting only for moments. He has no Religion; in the shallow age, where his days were cast, Religion was not discriminated

from the New and Old Light *forms* of Religion; and was, with these, becoming obsolete in the minds of men. His heart, indeed, is alive with a trembling adoration, but there is no temple in his understanding. He lives in darkness and in the shadow of doubt. His religion, at best, is an anxious wish; like that of Rabelais, "a great Perhaps."

He loved Poetry warmly, and in his heart; could he but have loved it purely, and with his whole undivided heart, it had been well. For Poetry, as Burns could have followed it, is but another form of Wisdom, of Religion; is itself Wisdom and Religion. But this also was denied him. His poetry is a stray vagrant gleam, which will not be extinguished within him, yet rises not to be the true light of his path, but is often a wildfire that misleads him. It was not necessary for Burns to be rich, to be, or to seem, "independent"; but it *was* necessary for him to be at one with his own heart; to place what was highest in his nature highest also in his life; "to seek within himself for that consistency and sequence, which external events would forever refuse him." He was born a poet; poetry was the celestial element of his being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavours. Lifted into that serene ether, whither he had wings given him to mount, he would have needed no other elevation: poverty, neglect and all evil, save the desecration of himself and his Art, were a small matter to him; the pride and the passions of the world lay far beneath his feet; and he looked down alike on noble and slave, on prince and beggar, and all that wore the stamp of man, with clear recognition, with brotherly affection, with sympathy, with pity. Nay, we question whether for his culture as a poet poverty and much suffering for a season were not absolutely advantageous. Great men, in looking back over their lives, have testified to that effect. "I would not for much," says Jean Paul, "that I had been born richer." And yet Paul's birth was poor enough; for, in another place, he adds: "The prisoner's allowance is bread and water; and I had often only the latter." But the gold that is refined in the hottest furnace comes out the purest; or, as he has himself expressed it, "the canary-bird sings sweeter the longer it has been trained in a darkened cage."

A man like Burns might have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry; industry which all true feeling sanctions, nay prescribes, and which has a beauty, for that cause, beyond the pomp of thrones: but to divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets was an ill-starred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets? What had he to do there, mingling his music with the coarse roar of altogether earthy voices; brightening the thick smoke of intoxication with fire lent him from heaven? Was it his aim to *enjoy* life? Tomorrow he must go drudge as an Exciseman! We wonder not that Burns became moody, indignant, and at times an offender against certain rules of society; but rather that he did not grow utterly frantic, and run *amuck*

against them all. How could a man, so falsely placed, by his own or others' fault, ever know contentment or peaceable diligence for an hour? What he did, under such perverse guidance, and what he forbore to do, alike fill us with astonishment at the natural strength and worth of his character.

Doubtless there was a remedy for this perverseness; but not in others; only in himself; least of all in simple increase of wealth and worldly "respectability." We hope we have now heard enough about the efficacy of wealth for poetry, and to make poets happy. Nay have we not seen another instance of it in these very days? Byron, a man of an endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns, is born in the rank not of a Scottish ploughman, but of an English peer: the highest worldly honours, the fairest worldly career, are his by inheritance; the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in another province, by his own hand. And what does all this avail him? Is he happy, is he good, is he true? Alas, he has a poet's soul, and strives toward the Infinite and the Eternal; and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the house-top to reach the stars! Like Burns, he is only a proud man; might, like him, have "purchased a pocket-copy of Milton to study the character of Satan"; for Satan also is Byron's grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently of his conduct. As in Burns's case too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth; both poet and man of the world he must not be; vulgar Ambition will not live kindly with poetic Adoration; he *cannot* serve God and Mammon. Byron, like Burns, is not happy; nay he is the most wretched of all men. His life is falsely arranged: the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world; but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now — we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which ere long will fill itself with snow!

Byron and Burns were sent forth as missionaries to their generation, to teach it a higher Doctrine, a purer Truth; they had a message to deliver, which left them no rest till it was accomplished; in dim throes of pain, this divine behest lay smouldering within them; for they knew not what it meant, and felt it only in mysterious anticipation, and they had to die without articulately uttering it. They are in the camp of the Unconverted; yet not as high messengers of rigorous though benignant truth, but as soft flattering singers, and in pleasant fellowship will they live there: they are first adulated, then persecuted; they accomplish little for others; they find no peace for themselves, but only death and the peace of the grave. We confess, it is not without a certain mournful awe that we view the fate of these noble souls, so richly gifted, yet ruined to so little purpose with all their gifts. It seems to us there is a stern moral taught in this piece of history, — *twice* told us in our own time! Surely to men of like genius, if there be any such, it carries with it a lesson of deep impressive significance. Surely it would become such a man, furnished for

the highest of all enterprises, that of being the Poet of his Age, to consider well what it is that he attempts, and in what spirit he attempts it. For the words of Milton are true in all times, and were never truer than in this: "He who would write heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem." If he cannot first so make his life, then let him hasten from this arena; for neither its lofty glories, nor its fearful perils, are fit for him. Let him dwindle into a modish balladmonger; let him worship and be-seeing the idols of the time, and the time will not fail to reward him. If, indeed, he can endure to live in that capacity! Byron and Burns could not live as idol-priests, but the fire of their own hearts consumed them; and better it was for them that they could not. For it is not in the favour of the great or of the small, but in a life of truth, and in the inexpugnable citadel of his own soul, that a Byron's or a Burns's strength must lie. Let the great stand aloof from him, or know how to reverence him. Beautiful is the union of wealth with favour and furtherance for literature; like the costliest flower-jar enclosing the loveliest amaranth. Yet let not the relation be mistaken. A true poet is not one whom they can hire by money or flattery to be a minister of their pleasures, their writer of occasional verses, their purveyor of table-wit; he cannot be their menial, he cannot even be their partisan. At the peril of both parties, let no such union be attempted! Will a Courser of the Sun work softly in the harness of a Dray-horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens, bringing light of all lands; will he lumber on mud highways, dragging ale for earthly appetites from door to door?

But we must stop short in these considerations, which would lead us to boundless lengths. We had something to say on the public moral character of Burns; but this also we must forbear. We are far from regarding him as guilty before the world, as guiltier than the average; nay from doubting that he is less guilty than one of ten thousand. Tried at a tribunal far more rigid than that where the *Plebiscita* of common civic reputations are pronounced, he has seemed to us even there less worthy of blame than of pity and wonder. But the world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men; unjust on many grounds, of which this one may be stated as the substance: It decides, like a court of law, by dead statutes; and not positively but negatively, less on what is done right, than on what is or is not done wrong. Not the few inches of deflection from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the *ratio* of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration. This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city's hippodrome; nay the circle of a ginhorse, its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are measured: and it is assumed that the diameter of the ginhorse, and that of the planet, will yield the same ratio when compared with them! Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burnses, Swifts, Rousseaus, which one

never listens to with approval. Granted, the ship comes into harbour with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful: but to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the Globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs.

With our readers in general, with men of right feeling anywhere, we are not required to plead for Burns. In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts, in a far nobler mausoleum than that one of marble; neither will his Works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of men. While the Shakespeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves; this little Valclusa Fountain will also arrest our eye: for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth, with a full gushing current, into the light of day; and often will the traveller turn aside to drink of its clear waters, and muse among its rocks and pines!

PETER THE GREAT

1672-1725

By JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY¹ (1814-1877)



ONE day, in the year 1697, the great Duke of Marlborough happened to be in the village of Saardam. He visited the dockyard of one Mynheer Calf, a rich ship-builder, and was struck with the appearance of a journeyman at work there. He was a large, powerful man, dressed in a red woollen shirt and duck trousers, with a sailor's hat, and seated, with an adze in his hand, upon a rough log of timber which lay on the ground. The man's features were bold and regular, his dark brown hair fell in natural curls about his neck, his complexion was strong and ruddy, with veins somewhat distended, indicating an ardent temperament and more luxurious habits than comported with his station; and his dark, keen eye glanced from one object to another with remarkable restlessness. He was engaged in earnest conversation with some strangers, whose remarks he occasionally interrupted, while he rapidly addressed them in a guttural but, not unmusical voice. As he became occasionally excited in conversation, his features twitched convulsively, the blood rushed to his forehead, his arms were tossed about with extreme violence of gesticulation, and he seemed constantly upon the point of giving way to some explosion of passion, or else of falling into a fit of catalepsy. His companions, however, did not appear alarmed by his vehemence, although they seemed to treat him with remarkable deference; and, after a short time, his distorted features would resume their symmetry and agreeable expression, his momentary frenzy would subside, and a bright smile would light up his whole countenance.

The Duke inquired the name of this workman, and was told it was one Pieter Baas, a foreign journeyman of remarkable mechanical abilities and great industry. Approaching, he entered into some slight conversation with him upon matters pertaining to his craft. While they were conversing a stranger of foreign mien and costume appeared, holding a voluminous letter in his hand; the workman started up, snatched it from his hand, tore off the seals and greedily devoured its contents, while the stately Marlborough walked away unnoticed. The Duke was well aware that, in this thin disguise, he saw the Czar of Muscovy. Pieter Baas, or Boss Peter, or Master Peter, was Peter the despot of all the Russias, a man

¹ Reprinted from the *North American Review*, October, 1845.

who, having just found himself the undisputed proprietor of a quarter of the globe with all its inhabitants, had opened his eyes to the responsibilities of his position, and had voluntarily descended from his throne for the noble purpose of qualifying himself to reascend it.

The empire of Russia, at this moment more than twice as large as Europe, having a considerable extent of sea-coasts, with flourishing commercial havens both upon the Baltic and the Black Seas, and a chain of internal communication, by canal and river, connecting them both with the Caspian and the Volga, was at the accession of Peter I of quite sufficient dimensions for any reasonable monarch's ambition, but of most unfortunate geographical position. Shut off from civilized western Europe by vast and thinly peopled forests and plains, having for neighbours only "the sledged Polack," the Turk, the Persian, and the Chinese, and touching nowhere upon the ocean, that great highway of civilization — the ancient empire of the Czars seemed always in a state of suffocation. Remote from the sea, it was a mammoth without lungs, incapable of performing the functions belonging to its vast organization, and presenting to the world the appearance of a huge, incomplete, and inert mass, waiting the advent of some new Prometheus to inspire it with life and light.

Its capital, the *bizarre* and fantastic Moscow, with its vast, turreted, and venerable Kremlin — its countless churches, with their flashing spires and clustering and turbaned minarets glittering in green, purple, and gold; its mosques, with the cross supplanting the crescent; its streets swarming with bearded merchants and ferocious Janizaries, while its female population were immured and invisible — was a true type of the empire, rather Asiatic than European, and yet compounded of both.

The government, too, was far more Oriental than European in its character. The Normans had, to be sure, in the eleventh century taken possession of the Russian government with the same gentleman-like effrontery with which, at about the same time, they had seated themselves upon every throne in Europe; and the crown of Ruric had been transmitted like the other European crowns for many generations, till it descended through a female branch upon the head of the Romanoffs, the ancestors of Peter and the present imperial family. But though there might be said to be an established dynasty, the succession to the throne was controlled by the Strelitzes, the licentious and ungovernable soldiery of the capital, as much as the Turkish or Roman Empire by the Janizaries or pretorians; and the history of the government was but a series of palace-revolutions, in which the sovereign, the tool alternately of the priesthood and the body-guard, was elevated, deposed, or strangled, according to the prevalence of different factions in the capital. The government was in fact, as it has been epigrammatically characterized, "a despotism tempered by assassination."

The father of Peter I, Alexis Michaelovitch, had indeed projected reforms in various departments of the government. He seems to have been, to a certain extent, aware of the capacity of his empire, and to have had some faint glimmerings of the responsibility which weighed upon him, as the inheritor of this vast hereditary estate. He undertook certain revisions of the laws, if the mass of contradictory and capricious edicts which formed the code deserve that name; and his attention had particularly directed itself to the condition of the army and the church. Upon his death, in 1677, he left two sons, Theodore and John, and four daughters, by his first wife; besides one son, Peter, born in 1672, and one daughter, Natalia, by the second wife, of the house of Narischkin. The eldest son, Theodore, succeeded, whose administration was directed by his sister, the ambitious and intriguing Princess Sophia, assisted by her paramour Galitzin. Theodore died in 1682, having named his half-brother Peter as his successor, to the exclusion of his own brother John, who was almost an idiot. Sophia, who, in the fitful and perilous history of Peter's boyhood, seems like the wicked fairy in so many Eastern fables, whose mission is constantly to perplex, and if possible destroy, the virtuous young prince, who, however, struggles manfully against her enchantments and her hosts of allies, and comes out triumphant at last — Sophia, assisted by Couvanski, general of the Strelitzes, excited a tumult in the capital. Artfully inflaming the passions of the soldiery, she directed their violence against all those who stood between her and the power she aimed at; many of the Narischkin family (the maternal relatives of Peter), with their adherents, were butchered with wholesale ferocity; many crown-officers were put to death; and the Princess at length succeeded in proclaiming the idiot John and the infant Peter as joint Czars, and herself regent.

From this time forth Sophia, having the reins of government securely in her hand, took particular care to surround the youthful Peter with the worst influences. She exposed him systematically to temptation, she placed about him the most depraved and licentious associates, and seems to have encouraged the germination of every vicious propensity with the most fostering care. In 1689, during the absence of Prince Galitzin upon his second unsuccessful invasion of the Crimea, Peter was married, at the age of seventeen, through the influence of a faction hostile to Sophia, to a young lady of the Lapouchin family. After the return of Galitzin a desperate revolt of the Strelitzes was concerted between their general and Sophia and Galitzin, whose object was to seize and murder Peter. He saved himself for the second time in the Convent of the Trinity — the usual place of refuge when the court was beleaguered, as was not unusual, by the Janizaries — assembled around him those of the boiars and the soldiers who were attached to him, and with the personal bravery and promptness which have descended like an heirloom in his family, de-

feated the conspirators at a blow, banished Galitzin to Siberia, and locked up Sophia in a convent, where she remained till her death, fifteen years afterward. His brother John remained nominally as joint Czar till his death in 1696.

In less than a year from this time Peter made the acquaintance of a very remarkable man, to whom, more than to any other, Russia seems to have been indebted for the first impulse toward civilization. Happening one day to be dining at the house of the Danish minister, he was pleased with the manners and conversation of his Excellency's private secretary. This was a certain youthful Genevese adventurer named Lefort. He had been educated for the mercantile profession and placed in a counting-house; but being of an adventurous disposition, with decided military tastes and talents, he had enlisted as a volunteer and served with some distinction in the Low Countries. Still following his campaigning inclinations, he enlisted under a certain Colonel Verstin, who had been commissioned by the Czar Alexis to pick up some German recruits, and followed him to Archangel. Arriving there, he found that the death of Alexis had left no demand for the services either of himself or the Colonel, and after escaping with difficulty transportation to Siberia, with which he seems to have been threatened for no particular reason, he followed his destiny to Moscow, where he found employment under the Danish envoy De Horn, and soon after was introduced to the Czar.

It was this young adventurer, a man of no extraordinary acquirements, but one who had had the advantage of a European education, and the genius to know its value and to reap its full benefit — a man of wonderful power of observation, in whom intuition took the place of experience, and who possessed the rare faculty of impressing himself upon other minds with that genial warmth and force which render the impression indelible — it was this truant Genevese clerk who planted the first seeds in the fertile but then utterly fallow mind of the Czar. Geniality and sympathy were striking characteristics of both minds, and they seem to have united by a kind of elective affinity from the first instant they were placed in neighbourhood of each other.

It was from Lefort that the Czar first learned the great superiority of the disciplined troops of western Europe over the licentious and anarchical soldiery of Russia. It was in concert with Lefort that he conceived on the instant the daring plan of annihilating the Strelitzes, the body-guard which had set up and deposed the monarchs — a plan that would have inevitably cost a less sagacious and vigorous prince his throne and life, and which he silently and cautiously matured, till, as we shall have occasion to relate, it was successfully executed. Almost immediately after his acquaintance with Lefort, he formed a regiment upon the European plan, which was to be the germ of the reformed army which he contemplated. This regiment was called the Preobrazinski body-guard, from the name of the pal-

ace, and Lefort was appointed its colonel, while the Czar entered himself as drummer.

It was to Lefort, also, that the Czar was about this time indebted for the acquaintance of the celebrated Menshikoff. This was another adventurer, who had great influence upon the fortunes of the empire, who sprang from the very humblest origin, and who seemed like Lefort to have been guided from afar by the finger of Providence to become a fit instrument to carry out the plans of Peter. The son of miserable parents upon the banks of the Volga, not even taught to read or write, Menshikoff sought his fortune in Moscow, and at the age of fourteen became apprentice to a pastry-cook, and earned his living as an itinerant vendor of cakes and pies; these he offered about the streets, recommending them in ditties of his own composing, which he sang in a very sweet voice. While engaged in this humble occupation he happened one day to attract the attention of Lefort, who entered into some little conversation with him. The Swiss volunteer, who had so lately expanded into the general and admiral of Muscovy, could hardly dream, nor did he live long enough to learn, that in that fair-haired, barefooted, sweet-voiced boy the future prince of the empire, general, governor, regent, and almost autocrat, stood disguised before him. There really seems something inexpressibly romantic in the accidental and strange manner in which the chief actors in the great drama of Peter's career seem to have been selected and to have received their several parts from the great hand of Fate. The youthful Menshikoff was presented by Lefort to the Czar, who was pleased with his appearance and vivacity and made him his page, and soon afterward his favourite and confidant. At about the same time that Peter commenced his model regiment, he had also commenced building some vessels at Voroneje, with which he had already formed the design of sailing down the Don and conquering Azov, the key to the Black Sea, from the Turks.

Nothing indicated the true instinct of Peter's genius more decidedly than the constancy with which he cultivated a love for maritime affairs. He is said in infancy to have had an almost insane fear of water; but, as there was never any special reason assigned for it, this was probably invented to make his naval progress appear more remarkable. At all events, he seems very soon to have conquered his hydrophobia, and in his boyhood appears to have found his chief amusement in paddling about the river Yausa, which passes through Moscow, in a little skiff built by a Dutchman, which had attracted his attention as being capable, unlike the flat-bottomed scows, which were the only boats with which he had been previously familiar, of sailing against the wind. Having solved the mystery of the keel, he became passionately fond of the sport, and not satisfied with the navigation of the Yausa, nor of the lake Peipus, upon which he amused himself for a time, he could not rest until he had proceeded to Archangel, where he purchased and manned a vessel, in which

he took a cruise or two upon the Frozen Ocean as far as Ponoï, upon the coast of Lapland.

Peter understood thoroughly the position of his empire, the moment he came to the throne. Previous Czars had issued a multiplicity of edicts, forbidding their subjects to go out of the empire. Peter saw that the great trouble was that they could not get out. Both the natural gates of his realm were locked upon him, and the keys were in the hands of his enemies. When we look at the map of Russia now, we do not sufficiently appreciate the difficulties of Peter's position at his accession. To do so is to appreciate his genius and the strength of his will. While paddling in his little skiff on the Yausa, he had already determined that this great inland empire of his, whose inhabitants had never seen or heard of the ocean, should become a maritime power. He saw that, without seaports, it could never be redeemed from its barbarism, and he was resolved to exchange its mongrel Orientalism for European civilization. Accordingly, before he had been within five hundred miles of blue water, he made himself a sailor, and at the same time formed the plan, which he pursued with iron pertinacity to its completion, of conquering the Baltic from the Swede, and the Euxine from the Turk. Fully to see and appreciate the necessity of this measure was, in the young, neglected barbarian prince, a great indication of genius; but the resolution to set about and accomplish this mighty scheme in the face of ten thousand obstacles constituted him a hero. He was, in fact, one of those few characters whose existence has had a considerable influence upon history. If he had not lived, Russia would very probably have been at the present moment one great Wallachia or Moldavia — a vast wilderness, peopled by the same uncouth barbarians who even now constitute the mass of its population, and governed by a struggling, brawling, confused mob of unlettered boiars, knavish priests, and cut-throat Janizaries.

It was not so trifling a task as it may now appear, for Russia to conquer Sweden and the Sublime Porte. On the contrary, Sweden was so vastly superior in the scale of civilization, and her disciplined troops, trained for a century upon the renowned battlefields of Europe, with a young monarch at their head who loved war as other youths love a mistress, gave her such a decided military preponderance that she looked upon Russia with contempt. The Ottoman Empire, too, was at that time not the rickety, decrepit state which it now is, holding itself up, like the cabman's horse, only by being kept in the shafts, and ready to drop the first moment its foreign master stops whipping; on the contrary, in the very year in which Peter inherited the empire from his brother Theodore, two hundred thousand Turks besieged Vienna, and drove the Emperor Leopold in dismay from his capital. Although the downfall of the Porte may be dated from the result of that memorable campaign, yet the Sultan was then a vastly more powerful potentate than the Czar, and the project

to snatch from him the citadel of Azov, the key of the Black Sea, was one of unparalleled audacity.

But Peter had already matured the project, and was determined to execute it. He required seaports, and, having none, he determined to seize those of his neighbours. Like the "King of Bohemia with his seven castles," he was the "most unfortunate man in the world, because, having the greatest passion for navigation and all sorts of sea affairs, he had never a seaport in all his dominions." Without stopping however, like Corporal Trim, to argue the point in casuistry, whether — Russia, like Bohemia, being an inland country — it would be consistent with Divine benevolence for the ocean to inundate his neighbour's territory in order to accommodate him, he took a more expeditious method. Preferring to go to the ocean, rather than wait for the ocean to come to him, in 1695 he sailed down the Don with his vessels, and struck his first blow at Azov. His campaign was unsuccessful, through the treachery and desertion of an artillery officer named Jacob; but, as the Czar through life possessed that happy faculty of never knowing when he was beaten, he renewed his attack the next year, and carried the place with the most brilliant success. The key of the Palus Mæotis was thus in his hands, and he returned in triumph to Moscow, where he levied large sums upon the nobility and clergy, to build and sustain a fleet upon the waters he had conquered, to drive the Tartars from the Crimea, and to open and sustain a communication with Persia, through Circassia and Georgia.

Thus the first point was gained, and his foot at last touched the ocean. Moreover, the Tartars of the Crimea, who had been from time immemorial the pest of Russia — a horde of savages, who "said their prayers but once a year, and then to a dead horse," and who had yet compelled the Muscovites to pay them an annual tribute, and had inserted in their last articles of peace the ignominious conditions that "the Czar should hold the stirrup of their Khan, and feed his horse with oats out of his cap, if they should chance at any time to meet" — these savages were humbled at a blow, and scourged into insignificance by the master hand of Peter.

A year or two before the capture of Azov, Peter had repudiated his wife. Various pretexts, such as infidelity and jealousy, have been assigned for the step; among others, the enmity of Menshikoff, whom she had incensed by the accusation that he had taken her husband to visit lewd women who had formerly been his customers for pies; but the real reason was that, like every one else connected with the great reformer, she opposed herself with the most besotted bigotry to all his plans. She was under the influence of the priests, and the priests, of course, opposed him. Unfortunately, the Czar left his son Alexis in the charge of the mother, a mistake which, as we shall see, occasioned infinite disaster.

Peter, having secured himself a seaport, sent a number of young Russians to study the arts of civilized life in Holland, Italy and Germany;

but, being convinced that he must do everything for himself, and set the example to his subjects, he resolved to descend from his throne and go to Holland to perfect himself in the arts, and particularly to acquire a thorough practical knowledge of maritime affairs.

Having been hitherto unrepresented in any European court, he fitted out a splendid embassy extraordinary to the States-General of Holland — Lefort, Golownin, Voristzin, and Menshikoff being the plenipotentiaries, while the Czar accompanied them *incognito*, as *attaché* to the mission. The embassy proceeded through Esthonia and Livonia, visits Riga — where the Swedish Governor, D'Alberg, refuses permission to visit the fortifications, an indignity which Peter resolves to punish severely — and, proceeding through Prussia, is received with great pomp by the King at Königsberg. Here the Germans and Russians, “most potent at pottery,” meet each other with exuberant demonstrations of friendship, and there is much carousing and hard drinking. At this place Peter leaves the embassy, travels privately and with great rapidity to Holland, and never rests till he has established himself as a journeyman in the dockyard of Mynheer Calf. From a seafaring man named Kist, whom he had known in Archangel, he hires lodgings, consisting of a small room and kitchen, and a garret above them, and immediately commences a laborious and practical devotion to the trade which he had determined to acquire. The Czar soon became a most accomplished ship-builder. His first essay was upon a small yacht, which he purchased and refitted upon his arrival, and in which he spent all his leisure moments, sailing about in the harbour, visiting the vessels in port, and astonishing the phlegmatic Dutchmen by the agility with which he flew about among the shipping. Before his departure he laid down and built, from his own draught and model, a sixty-gun ship, at much of the carpentry of which he worked with his own hands, and which was declared by many competent judges to be an admirable specimen of naval architecture.

But, besides his proficiency so rapidly acquired in all maritime matters, he made considerable progress in civil engineering, mathematics, and the science of fortification, besides completely mastering the Dutch language, and acquiring the miscellaneous accomplishments of tooth-drawing, blood-letting, and tapping for the dropsy. He was indefatigable in visiting every public institution, charitable, literary, or scientific, in examining the manufacturing establishments, the corn-mills, saw-mills, paper-mills, oil-factories, all of which he studied practically, with the view of immediately introducing these branches of industry into his own dominions; and, before leaving Holland, he spent some time at Texel, solely for the purpose of examining the whale-ships, and qualifying himself to instruct his subjects in this pursuit after his return. “*Wat is dat? Dat wil ik zien,*” was his eternal exclamation to the quiet Hollanders, who looked with profound astonishment at this boisterous foreign prince, in carpenter’s

disguise, flying round like a harlequin, swinging his stick over the backs of those who stood in his way, making strange grimaces, and rushing from one object to another with a restless activity of body and mind which seemed incomprehensible. He devoured every possible morsel of knowledge with unexampled voracity; but the sequel proved that his mind had an ostrich-like digestion as well as appetite. The seeds which he collected in Holland, Germany, and England bore a rich harvest in the Scythian wildernesses, where his hand planted them on his return. Having spent about nine months in the Netherlands, he left that country for England.

His purpose in visiting England was principally to examine her navy-yards, dockyards, and maritime establishments, and to acquire some practical knowledge of English naval architecture. He did not design to work in the dockyards, but he preserved his *incognito*, although received with great attention by King William, who furthered all his plans to the utmost, and deputed the Marquis of Caermarthen, with whom the Czar became very intimate, to minister to all his wants during his residence in England. He was first lodged in York Buildings; but afterward, in order to be near the sea, he took possession of a house called Sayes Court, belonging to the celebrated John Evelyn, "with a back door into the king's yard, at Deptford"; there, says an old writer, "he would often take up the carpenters' tools, and work with them; and he frequently conversed with the builders, who showed him their draughts, and the method of laying down, by proportion, any ship or vessel."

It is amusing to observe the contempt with which the servant of the gentle, pastoral Evelyn writes to his master concerning his imperial tenant, and the depredations and desecrations committed upon his "most boscaresque grounds." "There is a house full of people," he says, "right nasty. The Czar lies next your library, and dines in the parlour next your study. He dines at ten o'clock, and six at night; is very seldom at home a whole day; very often in the king's yard, or by water, dressed in several dresses. The best parlour is pretty clean for the King to be entertained in." Moreover, in the garden at Sayes Court, there was, to use Evelyn's own language, "a glorious and refreshing object, an impregnable hedge of about four hundred feet in length, nine feet high, and five feet in diameter, at any time of the year glittering with its armed and variegated leaves; the taller standards, at orderly distances, blushing with their natural coral"; and through this "glorious and refreshing object" the Czar amused himself by trundling a wheelbarrow every morning for the sake of the exercise!

He visited the hospitals, and examined most of the public institutions in England; and particularly directed his attention toward acquiring information in engineering, and collecting a body of skillful engineers and artificers to carry on the great project which he had already matured of

opening an artificial communication by locks and canals between the Volga, the Don, and the Caspian — a design, by the way, which was denounced by the clergy and nobility of his empire “as a piece of impiety, being to turn the streams one way which Providence had directed another.” His evenings were generally spent with the Marquis of Caermarthen, with pipes, beer, and brandy, at a tavern near Tower Hill, which is still called the “Czar of Muscovy.”

During his stay in England he went to see the University of Oxford, and visited many of the cathedrals and churches, and “had also the curiosity to view the Quakers and other Dissenters at their meeting-houses in the time of service.” In this connection it is impossible not to quote the egregiously foolish remarks of Bishop Burnet in his “History of his own Times”:

“I waited upon him often,” says the Bishop, “and was ordered, both by the King and the Archbishop, to attend upon him and to offer him such information as to our religion and constitution as he might be willing to receive. I had good interpreters, so I had much free discourse with him. He is a man of a very hot temper, soon influenced, and very brutal in his passion; he raises his natural heat by drinking much brandy, which he rectifies himself with great application; he is subject to convulsive motions all over his body, and his head seems to be affected with these. He wants not capacity, and has a larger measure of knowledge than might be expected from his education, which was very indifferent; a want of judgment, with an instability of temper, appears in him but too often and too evidently. He is mechanically turned, and seems designed by nature rather *to be a ship-carpenter than a great prince*. This was his chief study and exercise while he staid here; he wrought much with his own hands, and made all about him work at the models of ships. He told me he designed a great fleet at Azov, and with it to attack the Turkish Empire; but he did not seem capable of conducting so great a design, though his conduct in his wars since this has discovered a greater genius in him than appeared at that time. He was desirous to understand our doctrine, but he did not seem *disposed to mend matters in Muscovy*. He was, indeed, resolved to encourage learning and to polish his people by sending some of them to travel in other countries, and to draw strangers to come and live among them. He seemed apprehensive still of his sister’s intrigues. There is a mixture both of passion and severity in his temper. He is resolute, but understands little of war, and seemed not at all inquisitive in that way. After I had seen him often, and had conversed much with him, I could not but adore the depth of the providence of God, that had raised up such a furious man to so absolute an authority over so great a part of the world.” — (“History of his own Times,” vol. ii., pp. 221, 222.)

The complacency with which the prelate speaks of this "furious man, designed by nature rather to be a ship-carpenter than a great prince," who "did not seem disposed to mend matters in Muscovy," is excessively ludicrous. Here was a youth of twenty-five, who had seen with a glance the absolute necessity of opening for his empire a pathway to the ocean, and had secured that pathway by a blow, and who now, revolving in his mind the most daring schemes of conquest over martial neighbours, and vast projects of internal improvement for his domains, had gone forth in mask and domino from his barbarous citadel, not for a holiday pastime, but to acquire the arts of war and peace, and, like a modern Cadmus, to transplant from older regions the seeds of civilization to the barbarous wildernesses of his realm. Here was a crowned monarch, born in the purple, and in the very heyday of his youth, exchanging his diadem and sceptre for the tools of a shipwright, while at the same time in his capacious brain his vast future lay as clearly imaged, and his great projects already to his imagination appeared as palpable as, long years afterward, when completed, they became to the observation of the world; and yet, upon the whole, the churchman thought him "not disposed to mend matters in Muscovy," and rather fitted by nature "to be a ship-carpenter than a great prince."

The Czar, before his departure from England, engaged a large number of scientific persons, at the head of whom was Ferguson, the engineer, to accompany him to Russia, to be employed upon the various works of internal improvement already projected. To all these persons he promised liberal salaries, which were never paid, and perfect liberty to depart when they chose, "with crowns for convoy put into their purse"; although, in the sequel, the poor devils never got a ruble for their pains, and those who escaped assassination by some jealous Russian or other, and were able to find their way "bootless home, and weather-beaten back," after a few profitless years spent upon the Czar's sluices and bridges, were to be considered fortunate.

One of the disadvantages, we suppose, of one man's owning a whole quarter of the globe and all its inhabitants, is the tendency to think lightly of human obligations. It is useless to occupy one's mind with engagements that no human power can enforce. The artificers, being there, might accomplish their part of the Czar's mission to civilize, or at least to Europeanize, Russia. This was matter of consequence to the world; their salaries were of no importance to anybody but themselves. It is odd that these persons were the first to introduce into Russia the science of reckoning by Arabic numerals, accounts having been formerly kept (and, indeed, being still kept by all shopkeepers and retail dealers) by means of balls upon a string, as billiards are marked in America. For the Czar to have introduced an improved method of account-keeping by means of the very men with whom he intended to keep no account at all seems a superfluous piece of irony,

but so it was. He had, however, a nicer notion of what was due from one potentate to another; for, upon taking his departure from England, he took from his breeches-pocket a ruby, wrapped in brown paper, worth about ten thousand pounds, and presented it to King William. He also, in return for the agreeable hours passed with Lord Caermarthen at the "Czar of Muscovy" upon Tower Hill, presented that nobleman with the right to license every hogshead of tobacco exported to Russia by an English company who had paid him fifteen thousand pounds for the monopoly, and to charge five shillings for each license.

Upon his return through Vienna, here he was entertained with great pomp, he received news of an insurrection which had broken out in Moscow, but which had already been suppressed by the energy of General Patrick Gordon. This news induced him to give up his intended visit to Italy and to hasten back to his capital. He found upon his arrival that the Strelitzes, who, instigated of course by the Princess Sophia, were the authors of the revolt, had been defeated and the ringleaders imprisoned. He immediately hung up three or four of them in front of Sophia's window, had a half dozen more hung and quartered, and a few more broken upon the wheel. Under the circumstances, this was quite as little as a Czar who respected himself, and who proposed to remain Czar, could have done by way of retaliation upon a body of men as dangerous as these Strelitzes.

It is not singular, however, that at that day, when the Czar of Muscovy was looked upon by western Europeans as an ogre who habitually breakfasted upon his subjects, these examples of wholesome severity were magnified into the most improbable fables. Korb, the secretary of the Austrian legation at Moscow, entertained his sovereign with minute details of several banquets given by Peter to the nobility and diplomatic corps, at every one of which several dozen Strelitzes were decapitated in the dining-room. He tells of one select dinner-party in particular, in which the Czar chopped off the heads of twenty with his own hands, washing down each head with a bumper of brandy, and then obliging Lefort, and several of the judges, and some of the foreign ministers, to try their hand at the sport. In short, if we could believe contemporary memorialists, the Strelitzes were kept in preserves like pheasants, and a grand *battue* was given once a week by the Czar to his particular friends, in which he who bagged the most game was sure to recommend himself most to the autocrat. If we were to rely upon the general tone of contemporary history, or to place any credence in circumstantial and statistical details of persons having facts within their reach, we should believe that there never was so much fun in Moscow as while these Strelitzes lasted. Residents there stated that two thousand of them were executed in all, including those made away with by the Czar and the *dilettanti*.

Perhaps our readers may think that we are exaggerating. We can assure

them that the flippancy is not ours, but history's. We should have dwelt less upon the topic had not our friend the Marquis de Custine reproduced some of these fables with such imperturbable gravity.

At all events, the Strelitzes were entirely crushed by these vigorous measures; and from cutting off the heads of the Janizaries, the Czar now found leisure to cut off the petticoats and beards of his subjects. The great cause of complaint which De Custine makes against Peter is that he sought to improve his country by importing the seeds of civilization from the older countries of western Europe. He would have preferred to have had the Russians, being a Slavonic race, civilized as it were Slavonically. What this process is, and where it has been successfully put into operation, he does not inform us. As we read the history of the world, it seems to us that the arts have circled the earth, successively implanting themselves in different countries at different epochs, and producing different varieties of intellectual, moral, and physical fruit, corresponding to the myriad influences exercised upon the seed. At all events, if Peter made a mistake in importing the germs of ancient culture from more favoured lands, it was a mistake he made in common with Cadmus, and Cecrops, and Theseus, and other semi-fabulous personages — with Solon, and Lycurgus, and Pythagoras, in less crepuscular times.

Right or wrong, however, Peter was determined to Occidentalize his empire. The darling wish of his heart was to place himself upon the seashore, in order the more easily to Europeanize his country. In the meantime, and while awaiting a good opportunity for the "re-annexation" of Ingria, Esthonia, and Livonia, provinces which had several centuries before belonged to the Russian crown, but had been ceded to and possessed by Sweden for ages, he began to denationalize his subjects by putting a tax upon their beards and their petticoats. Strange to say, his subjects were so much more patriotic than their master, that the tax became very productive. Peter increased his revenue, but could not diminish the beards or petticoats. He was obliged to resort to force, and by "entertaining a score or two of tailors and barbers" at each gate of Moscow, whose business it was to fasten upon every man who entered, and to "cut his petticoats all round about," as well as his whiskers, he at last succeeded in humanizing their costume — a process highly offensive, and which caused the clergy, who naturally favoured the Russian nationality upon which they were fattened, to denounce him as Antichrist. At the same time he altered the commencement of the year from the 1st of September to the 1st of January, much to the astonishment of his subjects, who wondered that the Czar could change the course of the sun. He also instituted assemblies for the encouragement of social intercourse between the sexes. But his most important undertakings were the building, under his immediate superintendence, assisted by the English officers whom he had brought with him, of a large fleet upon the Don, and the junction of that

river with the Volga. About this time he met with an irreparable loss in the death of Lefort, who perished at the early age of forty-six. Peter was profoundly afflicted by this event, and honoured his remains with magnificent obsequies.

Both coasts of the Gulf of Finland, together with both banks of the river Neva, up to the lake Ladoga, had been long and were still in possession of the Swedes. These frozen morasses were not a tempting site for a metropolis, certainly; particularly when they happened to be in the possession of the most warlike nation of Europe, governed by the most warlike monarch, as the sequel proved, that had ever sat upon its throne. Still, Peter had determined to take possession of that coast, and already in imagination had built his capital upon those dreary solitudes, peopled only by the elk, the wolf, and the bear. This man, more than any one perhaps that ever lived, was an illustration of the power of volition. He always settled in his own mind exactly what he wanted, and then put on his wishing-cap. With him to will was to have. Obstacles he took as a matter of course. It never seemed to occur to him to doubt the accomplishment of his purpose. For our own part we do not admire the capital which he built, nor the place he selected; both are mistakes, in our humble opinion, as time will prove and is proving. But it is impossible not to admire such a masterly effort of human volition as the erection of Petersburg.

In the year 1700 was formed the alliance between Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, the King of Denmark, and the Czar Peter, against Charles XII, King of Sweden, then a boy of eighteen, of whose character nothing was known, and who, it was thought probable, might be bullied. The Czar, as we know, desired Ingria and Carelia. Augustus wished to regain Esthonia and Livonia, ceded by Poland to Charles XI of Sweden; and Denmark wished to recover Holstein and Schleswig. It soon appeared that the allied sovereigns had got hold of the wrong man. Charles XII, to the astonishment of his own court no less than of his enemies, in one instant blazed forth a hero. He "smote the sledded Polack," to begin with; then defeated the Danes; and, having thus dispatched his two most formidable enemies in appearance, he was at leisure to devote his whole attention to the Czar, whom, however, he treated with the contempt which a thoroughbred soldier, at the head of tried and disciplined troops, naturally felt for the barbarous autocrat of barbarous hordes.

Peter, however, who knew nothing of war but in theory, with the exception of his maiden campaign of Azov, went manfully forward to the encounter. He invaded Ingria at the head of sixty thousand men; and wishing, like Andrew Aguecheek, to "keep on the windy side of the law," and to save appearances, he defended his invasion by the ludicrous pretext that his ambassadors had been charged exorbitant prices for pro-

visions on their tour through the Swedish provinces to Holland, and that he himself had been denied a sight of the citadel at Riga. Not that he wanted Riga himself, or Ingria, or Livonia — “Oh, no, not at all” — but the preposterous charges made by the butchers and bakers of Ingria were insults which could only be washed out in blood. On the 20th of September he laid siege to Narva, a strongly fortified town on the river Narowa. On the 19th of November, Charles XII fell upon Peter’s army during a tremendous snow-storm, which blew directly in their teeth, and with nine thousand soldiers completely routed and cut to pieces or captured about sixty thousand Russians. Never was a more ignominious defeat. The Russians were slaughtered like sheep, and their long petticoats prevented the survivors from running away half as fast as they wished. The consequence was that, according to the Swedish accounts, the prisoners four times outnumbered the whole Swedish army.

One would have thought that this would have settled the Czar for a little while, and kept him quiet and reasonable. It did so. He preserved the most imperturbable sang-froid after his return to Moscow, and devoted himself with more zeal than ever to the junction of the Baltic and the Euxine, just at the moment when the former seemed farthest from him, and when a common man would have been “qualmish at the name” of Baltic. At the same time, reversing the commonplace doctrine, he continues in war to prepare for peace — with one hand importing sheep from Saxony, erecting linen and paper factories, building hospitals and founding schools, while with the other he melts all the church and convent bells in Moscow into cannon, and makes every preparation for a vigorous campaign the ensuing season. He had not the slightest suspicion that he was beaten. He was, in fact, one of those intellectual Titans who never feel their strength till they have been fairly struck to the earth. “I know very well,” he says in his journal, “that the Swedes will have the advantage of us for a considerable time; but they will teach us at length to beat them.” And at a later period he says: “If we had obtained a victory over the Swedes at Narva, being, as we were, so little instructed in the arts of war and policy, into what an abyss might not this good fortune have sunk us! On the contrary, the success of the Swedes cost them very dear at Pultowa.”

In the following spring his troops obtained some trifling successes, and General Scherematoff made the memorable capture of Marienburg, in Livonia, memorable not so much in a military point of view as on account of a young and pretty Livonian girl who was captured with the town. This young woman, whose Christian name was Martha, without any patronymic, or any at least that has been preserved, was born near Dorpt, and had been educated by one Dr. Gluck, a Lutheran minister at Marienburg, who pronounced her a “pattern of virtue, intelligence, and good conduct”; she had been married the day before the battle of Marienburg

to a Swedish sergeant, who fell in the action, and she now found herself alone, a friendless, helpless widow and orphan of sixteen, exposed without any protector to all the horrors of a besieged and captured town.

If a writer of fiction, with a brain fertile in extravagant and incredible romance, had chosen to describe to us this young peasant-girl, weeping half distracted among the smoking ruins of an obscure provincial town, and then, after rapidly shifting a few brilliant and tumultuous scenes in his phantasmagoria, had presented to us the same orphan girl as a crowned empress, throned upon a quarter of the world, and the sole arbitress and autocrat of thirty millions of human beings, and all this without any discovery of a concealed origin, without crime and without witchcraft, with nothing supernatural in the machinery, and nothing intricate in the plot — should we not all have smiled at his absurdity? And yet, this captive girl became the consort of the Czar Peter, and upon his death the Empress of all the Russias. The Russian General Bauer saw her, and rescued her from the dangers of the siege. She afterward became the mistress of Men-shikoff, with whom she lived until 1704, when, in the seventeenth year of her age, the Czar saw her, was captivated by her beauty, and took her for his mistress, and afterward privately, and then publicly, married her.

It is to this epoch that belongs the abolition of the patriarchal dignity in Russia. Peter, having at a blow destroyed the Strelitzes, had long intended to annihilate the ecclesiastical power, the only balance which existed in the country to the autocracy of the sovereign. The superstition of the Russians was and is unbounded. Their principal saint was Saint Anthony, who, says a quaint old author, “came all the way from Rome to Novgorod by water on a millstone, sailing down the Tiber to Civit  Vecchia, from thence passing through several seas to the mouth of the Neva, then went up that, and, crossing the lake Ladoga into the Volkhoff, arrived at the city before named. Besides this extraordinary voyage, he wrought several other miracles as soon as he landed where the monastery now stands that is dedicated to him; one was, to order a company of fishermen to cast their nets into the sea; which having done, they immediately drew up, with a great quantity of fish, a large trunk containing several church ornaments, sacred utensils, and priestly vestments for celebrating the liturgy, which the Russians, as well as the Eastern Greeks, believe was first performed at Rome in the same manner and with the same ceremonies as they themselves use at this time. The people tell you further that he built himself a little cell, in which he ended his days. In this place there now stands a chapel, in which they say he was buried, and that his body remains as uncorrupted as at the instant of his death. Over the door of the cell the monks show a millstone, which they endeavour to make the ignorant people believe is the very same that the saint sailed upon from Rome, and to which great devotions were once paid, and many offerings made till the time Peter the Great made himself sovereign pontiff.”

To this saint, or to Saint Nicholas, we forget which, letters of introduction were always addressed by the priests, and placed in the hands of the dead when laid in their coffins. The superstition of the Russians is grosser and more puerile than that of any people purporting to be Christians. They would rather starve than eat pigeons, because the Holy Ghost assumed the form of a dove; they dip their new-born children into the Neva in January, through holes cut in the ice, directly after the ceremony of blessing the water has been concluded by the Patriarch; and it would be an easy but endless task to enumerate other similar absurdities. It may be supposed that the patriarchal dignity, founded upon superstition as solid as this, would be a difficult power to contend with. It was so. The Patriarch's power was enormous. He pronounced sentence of life and death, and torture, without intervention of any tribunal. On Palm Sunday he rode to church upon an ass "caparisoned in white linen," at the head of a long procession of ecclesiastical and civil dignitaries, with a mitre upon his head, and "skirts of many colours, three or four ells long," borne by a band of young men, while the Czar walked uncovered by his side, holding the bridle of the beast upon his arm.

This dignity, which had been established by a sort of accident in the year 1588, up to which time the Russian Church acknowledged the supremacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople, had grown to be very distasteful to Peter. The Church was the greatest possible enemy to his plans of reformation. The bigotry of its opposition to all his projects was insurmountable. Besides, it was very inconvenient that any one should have any power or any rights except himself. He determined to annihilate the office of Patriarch, and to place himself at the head of the Church. We do not find, however, that he thought it necessary to go through an apprenticeship in this profession, as he had done in others; but, on the contrary, upon the death of the Patriarch Adrian, which happened about this time, he simply appointed himself *pontifex maximus*, and declined nominating any other Patriarch. The man who had destroyed the Janizaries, cut off the beards of his subjects, and changed the course of the sun, was also strong enough to trample the prelate's mitre in the dust. He was entirely successful in his contest with the Church. The clergy made but a feeble resistance. The printing-press, to be sure, which he had first introduced into Russia, swarmed with libels upon him, and denounced him as Antichrist; but he was defended by others of the clergy, "because the number six hundred and sixty-six was not found in his name, and he had not the sign of the beast."

Before the close of the year 1702 the troops of the Czar had driven the Swedes from the Ladoga and the Neva, and had taken possession of all the ports in Carelia and Ingria. On the 16th of May, without waiting another moment after having possessed himself of the locality, he begins to build his metropolis. One hundred thousand miserable workmen are con-

sumed in the first twelve months, succumbing to the rigorous climate and the unhealthy position. But "*il faut casser des œufs pour faire une omelette*"; in one year's time there are thirty thousand houses in Petersburg. Never was there such a splendid improvisation. Look for a moment at a map of Russia and say if Petersburg was not a magnificent piece of volition — a mistake, certainly, and an extensive one — but still a magnificent mistake. Upon a delta, formed by the dividing branches of the Neva — upon a miserable morass half under water, without stones, without clay, without earth, without wood, without building materials of any kind — having behind it the outlet of the lake Ladoga and its tributary swamps, and before it the Gulf of Finland contracting itself into a narrow compass, and ready to deluge it with all the waters of the Baltic whenever the southwest wind should blow a gale eight and forty hours — with a climate of polar severity, and a soil as barren as an iceberg — was not Petersburg a bold *impromptu*? We never could look at this capital, with its imposing though monotonous architecture, its colossal squares, its vast colonnades, its endless vistas, its spires and minarets sheathed in barbaric gold and flashing in the sun, and remember the magical rapidity with which it was built, and the hundred thousand lives that were sacrificed in building it, without recalling Milton's description of the building of Pandemonium:

*"Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
 Rose like an exhalation, . . .
 Built like a temple, where pilasters round
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
 With golden architrave; nor did there want
 Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven;
 The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon
 Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
 Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
 Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
 Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
 In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
 Stood fixed her stately height; and straight the doors
 Opening their brazen folds discover, wide
 Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
 And level pavement."*

Within a few months after the foundation of Petersburg and Constadt, Peter had the pleasure of piloting into his new seaport with his own hands a vessel belonging to his old friend Cornelius Calf, of Saardam. The transfer of the seat of government, by the removal of the Senate from Moscow to Petersburg, was effected a few years afterward. Since that time, the

repudiated Oriental capital of the ancient Czars, the magnificent Moscow, with her golden tiara and her Eastern robe, has sat, like Hagar in the wilderness, deserted and lonely in all her barbarian beauty. Yet even now, in many a backward look and longing sigh she reads plainly enough that she is not forgotten by her sovereign, that she is still at heart preferred, and that she will eventually triumph over her usurping and artificial rival.

The building of Petersburg in a year was, however, a mere *aside* in the great military drama that was going on. Peter founded this city as soon as he had won a place for it; but the war still went on. While the Czar was erecting his capital, establishing woolen manufactures, and importing sheep from Saxony, Charles XII was knocking the Elector of Saxony off the Polish throne, putting Stanislaus Leckzinsky in his place, and ravaging all Poland and Saxony. The scenes of the great drama which occupied the next few years, but which we have no intention of sketching, opened in Poland, and closed on the confines of Turkey. It is a magnificent, eventful, important drama, a chapter of history which has often been written and is familiar to almost every one, and yet which would well bear handling again. There is no life of Peter which is in all respects satisfactory, which does not partake too much of eulogium or censure in its estimation of his character; and there is none which develops with sufficient accuracy and impartiality, and in a sufficiently striking manner, the stirring events of the great Northern war. The brilliant drama enacted in the first fifteen years of the present century — forming probably the most splendid chapter in the military history of the world, and which is still so fresh in the minds of men — has thrown into comparative oblivion the very picturesque and imposing scenes which were displayed in the first fifteen years of the eighteenth. And yet what a magnificent subject for the historical painter, what imposing personages, what dramatic catastrophes, what sudden and bewildering reverses, what wild scenery, what Salvator-like chiaroscuro — dark Sarmatian forests enveloping the actors in mystery and obscurity, with flashes of light breaking upon the anxious suspense of Europe, and revealing potentous battles, sieges, and hair-breadth escapes — what “dreadful marches” through the wilderness, what pitched combats, upon whose doubtful result hinged, as almost never before or since, the weal or woe of millions, and in which kings fought sword in hand in the hottest of the fight, with their crowns staked upon the issue!

There was always something very exciting to our imagination in the characters of the three kings who were the principal actors in the Northern war. There seemed to be a strange, fitful, mythical character about the war and the men who waged it. The Elector Augustus of Saxony, King of Poland, with his superhuman and almost fabulous physical strength, his personal bravery, his showy, chivalrous character, his world-renowned adventures in a gentler field, familiar to posterity through the records of

"La Saxe gallante," is a striking personage. It is astonishing that such a magnificent Lothario should have chosen, for the barren honour of being elected to the Polish throne, to exchange the brilliant and voluptuous gaiety of his own court for "the bloody noses and cracked crowns" which were "passing current" in Poland. But it is still more astonishing that, having once engaged in the affair, he should have cut such a miserable figure in it. The splendid Augustus, Augustus the Strong, Augustus the Gallant, became merely the anvil for the sledge-hammers of Charles and Peter. He made a fool of himself; he disgraced himself more than it seemed possible for a human being to disgrace himself; he humiliated himself more completely, more stupidly, because more unnecessarily, than it seemed possible for the greatest idiot, as well as the most arrant coward, to humiliate himself. He lost his crown at the very start, went down on his knees in the dirt to pick it up again, made a secret treaty with Charles, renouncing his alliance with the Czar, deserted his ally with incredible folly just as the Russians in conjunction with his own troops were gaining a brilliant victory and entering Warsaw in triumph, concealed his shameful negotiation from his own generals, while at the same time he wrote a letter to Charles, apologizing for having gained a victory, and assuring him that he had intended to have drawn off his troops and deserted to the enemy, but that his orders had not been obeyed, and then sneaked off to Charles's camp, where, in obedience to that monarch's orders, he capped the climax of his shame by writing a letter of sincere and humble congratulation to Stanislaus Leckzinsky for supplanting him upon his own throne. Peter, in the sequel, put his crown on his head again, to be sure; but forever after he looked like

". . . the thief,
*Who from the shelf the precious diadem stole,
 And put it in his pocket."*

What a pity that this man, who was deficient neither in courage nor, we suppose, in a certain amount of intellect sufficient for all ordinary purposes, should have got himself into such a scrape merely for the sake of carrying an election over the Prince of Conti and Stanislaus! The truth was that, the moment he got among giants — giants in action, like Charles and Peter — he showed himself the pygmy he was in mind, despite his stature, his strength, and his personal bravery.

And Charles XII, the hero, the crowned gladiator — what had he to do with the eighteenth century? The hero of everybody's boyhood, he remains a puzzle and a mystery to us in our maturer years. He seems an impossibility in the times in which he lived. On the death of Charles XI, and the commencement of the hostile movement by Russia and Denmark, the stripling sovereign seems to dilate into the vast, shadowy proportions of some ancient hero of Scandinavian Sagas. He seems like one of the

ancient Norsemen, whose vocation was simply to fight — who conquered the whole earth, not because they wanted it, but because they were sent into the world for no other earthly purpose; a legitimate representative of the old Sea-Kings, or rather an ancient Sea-King himself, reappearing in the eighteenth century, with no specially defined object, and proposing to himself no particular business in the world which he had so suddenly revisited, but to fight as much as possible, and with anybody that came along. Viewed in this light, he can be judged more justly. He was out of place where he was. He would have been a magnificent hero and a useful personage six or seven hundred years earlier. He was a very mischievous character in the eighteenth century. People no longer fought in the same way as before; they no longer fought for the fun of it; they now had always an object in their wars. Sovereigns, however belligerent in taste, had always an eye to their interest. This was pre-eminently the case with his great antagonist, Peter. He never fought except for an object; but, sooner than relinquish the object, he would have fought till “sun and moon were in the flat sea sunk.” He was a creator, a founder, a lawgiver, as well as a warrior. He was constructive; Charles merely destructive. The Czar was a great statesman; Charles only a great gladiator. In war, Peter was always preparing for peace; as for Charles, after he first started upon his career, he never seemed to have had the faintest suspicion that there was such a thing, such a *status*, as peace. He came into the world to fight, and he fought; he lived fighting, he died fighting. He poured himself out, like a fierce torrent from his native mountains, in one wild, headlong, devastating flood. There was nothing beneficent, nothing fertilizing, in his career. His kingdom was neglected, his treasury exhausted, his subjects impoverished; while he himself, from the admiration and wonder of Europe, became, or would have become, but for his timely death, its laughing-stock. The hero at Narva was only Bombastes Furioso at Bender.

While Charles was deposing Augustus and crowning Stanislaus, the troops of Peter were not idle. Keeping his eye ever fixed upon his great object, the Czar was adding to his domain province after province of what was then the Swedish sea-coast. Dorpat and Narva are captured, and with them all Ingria, of which Peter makes the pastry-cook's apprentice Governor. Courland soon follows, and now the Czar joins his forces to those of Augustus in Poland. While he is called off to quell an insurrection in Astrakhan (distances are nothing to the Czar) Augustus seizes the opportunity to make the ignominious compact with the Swedish king to which we have referred, and — most shameful and perfidious part of his treason — surrenders to the vengeance of the ferocious Charles, *to the torture and the wheel*, the unfortunate General Patkul, ambassador of the Czar at the court of Augustus, who had incurred the hatred of the Swedish monarch for heading a deputation of Livonian nobles, and presenting to him a petition concerning the rights and privileges of their

province. The allies of King Augustus take possession of Warsaw, while King Augustus himself is writing his congratulations to King Stanislaus.

Peter, having helped himself to almost as many Swedish provinces as he cared for, while Charles has been bullying Augustus and breaking Patkul on the wheel, is now disposed to treat for peace. The French envoy at Dresden offers his services, but Charles declines treating except at Moscow. "My brother Charles wishes to act Alexander," says the Czar; "but he shall not find me Darius."

Peter now conceives almost exactly the same plan by which the conqueror of the nineteenth century was entrapped and destroyed. He makes his country and climate fight for him, and retreats slowly before his advancing enemy, drawing him on step by step to a barren country, whence he could have no retreat, and where Peter could suddenly advance from his own secure position and overwhelm him at a blow. With masterly generalship he retreats before his hot-headed adversary, still "tempting him to the desert with his sword," marches to Mohilev and Orsha on the eastern bank of the Dnieper, a position in free communication with Smolensk, sends his Cossacks to lay waste the country for thirty miles round, and then orders them to join him beyond the Borysthenes. The two Northern monarchs now disappear from the eyes of anxious Europe among the wildernesses of ancient Scythia. Peter, with a hundred thousand men well provided and in convenient communication with his own cities and magazines, remains quiet. Charles, intent upon dictating terms at Moscow, crosses the Borysthenes with eighty thousand men. A fierce battle without results is fought on the Beresina. Charles pushes on to Smolensk. By order of Peter the country between the Borysthenes and Smolensk had been laid waste. At the approach of winter the Swedish army dwindles and wastes away beneath the horrors of the iron climate. Still Charles advances, when suddenly, and to the Czar inexplicably, he turns aside from his path, abandons his design upon Moscow, and directs his steps to the Ukraine. The mystery is solved by the news of Mazeppa's treason. The old Hetman of the Cossacks deserts to Charles, promising to bring over all his troops: he brings no one but himself; the Cossacks scorn his treachery, and remain faithful to their Czar.

By this time it was December, the cold intense, and, the Swedish army perishing by thousands, Count Piper implores his master to halt and go into the best winter-quarters they could find in the Ukraine. The King refuses, resolved to reduce the Ukraine, and then march to Moscow. In the month of May, after a winter spent by the Czar's forces in comfortable quarters and by the King's exposed to all kinds of misery, Charles lays siege to Pultowa with eighteen thousand men, the remnant of his eighty thousand. On the 15th of June, 1709, the Czar appears before Pultowa, and, by feint of attack upon the Swedes, succeeds in throwing two thousand men into the place, and at length, a few days after, gives him battle

and utterly routs and destroys his army. Both the King and the Czar, throughout this

*" . . . drest Pultowa's day,
When fortune left the royal Swede,"*

fight in the front of the battle. Several balls pierce the Czar's clothes; while Charles, having been previously wounded in the heel, is carried through the fight upon a litter. After the total overthrow of his army Charles escapes on horseback with a handful of followers, and, entering the confines of Turkey, halts at Bender on the Dniester.

The battle of Pultowa and the final overthrow of Charles are followed during the autumn and winter by the complete conquest of Livonia—Viborg, Elbing, Riga, and Revel being taken early in 1710. At the same time Peter deposes Stanislaus and restores the illustrious Augustus.

In the mean time Charles remains at Bender, the stipendiary of the Sultan, while Poniatowski, his emissary at the Porte, is busily intriguing to bring about a declaration of war from Turkey against the Czar. In conjunction with the Khan of the Crimean Tartars, who appeals to the Sultan's jealousy of the increasing power of Russia, and inspires him with a desire to recover Azov and expel his encroaching neighbours from the Black Sea, the envoy succeeds. The Grand Mufti declares that it is necessary for the Sultan to go to war with the Czar; whereupon the Muscovite ambassador is forthwith "clapped into prison" by way of commencement of hostilities, and the war begins. Peter immediately makes a levy of one man in four, besides one "valet out of every two belonging to the nobility," makes a solemn declaration of war, and then marches at the head of forty thousand men to the frontier of Turkey. Previously to his departure he makes a public proclamation of his previous marriage to Catharine; and the Empress, despite his earnest remonstrances, accompanies the invading army.

It is strange that the Czar on this expedition should have committed the same error, and placed himself in almost the same unfortunate predicament, as his adversary Charles. Trusting to the representations and the friendship of the faithless Hospodar of Moldavia, he advances rapidly at the head of an insufficient force into a hostile and barren country, relying for men and munitions of war upon his ally. Crossing the Pruth, he finds himself near Jassy, in a hostile country between an army of Turks and another of Tartars, with a deep and rapid river between him and his own dominions. Forty thousand Russians are held at bay by two hundred thousand Turks and Tartars. The situation of the Czar is terrible; annihilation seems to stare him in the face. His enemy Charles visits the Turkish camp in disguise, urging the Czar's destruction upon the Vizier. A destructive battle is going on unceasingly, which in three days costs him eighteen thousand men. Retreat is impossible; no ally is near him, no

succour expected. What can possibly extricate him? Shall he dash upon the Turks at the head of his remaining forces and cut his way through them, or die, sword in hand, in the attempt? Shall he surrender to the overwhelming power of the Sultan's army, and be paraded at Constantinople as the captive Czar? Tortured and perplexed, he shuts himself up alone in his tent and falls into terrible convulsions. None of his generals dare approach him; he has forbidden an entrance to all. Suddenly, in spite of the prohibition, the captive of Marienburg stands before him. She who at all times possessed a mysterious power to calm the spasmodic affections, half physical, half mental, to which he was subject, now appears before him like an angel to relieve his agony and to point out an escape from impending ruin. She suggests the idea of negotiation, which had occurred to no one in the desperate situation in which they were placed, and which she instinctively prophesied would still be successful. She strips herself of her jewels, and ransacks the camp for objects of value to form a suitable present for the Grand Vizier. The Vice-Chancellor Shaffiroff is dispatched to the enemy's camp, and the apparently impossible result is a treaty of peace. Arms are suspended immediately, and soon afterward honourable articles are signed, of which the principal are the surrender of Azov, the exclusion of the Czar from the Black Sea, the demolition of the fortress of Taganrog, the withdrawal of the Russian soldiers from the neighbourhood of the Danube, and the promise of free passage to Charles XII through Russia to his own states.

It is unnecessary to analyse or to criticize the different motives that actuated the Vizier in acceding to an honourable negotiation, when the Czar seemed to be so completely in his power. It is sufficient that this was the surprising and fortunate result of Catharine's counsel. "Her great merit," says Voltaire, "was that she saw the possibility of negotiation at a moment when the generals seem to have seen nothing but an inevitable misfortune." No language can describe the rage and mortification of Charles XII at this unexpected result — at this apparently impossible escape of his hated rival from overwhelming ruin. Hastening to the camp of the Vizier, he upbraids him, as if he had been his master instead of his stipendiary; he expresses his profound disgust that the Czar has not been carried to Constantinople, instead of being allowed to go home so easily. "And who will govern his empire in his absence?" asked the Vizier, with bitter irony, adding that "it would never do to have all the sovereigns away from home." In answer to this retort, Charles grins ferociously in his face, turns on his heel, and tears the Vizier's robe with his spurs. After thus insulting the great functionary of the Sultan, he continues three years longer a pensionary upon his bounty. To the reiterated entreaties of his Senate, that he would return, and attend to the pressing exigencies of his kingdom, he replies, in a style worthy of Bombastes, that he would send one of his boots to govern them, and remains at Bender, still deluded

and besotted with the idea that he should yet appear with a Turkish force before Moscow. At last, in 1714, after fighting a pitched battle at the head of his valets, grooms, and house-servants, against a considerable Turkish army, sent to dislodge him by force, he is ignominiously expelled from the country whose hospitality he has so long outraged, and returns in the disguise of a courier to Sweden.

The Czar upon his return to his dominions gains a considerable victory over the Swedish fleet in the Baltic, commanding his own in person in a line-of-battle ship of his own building. On arriving at Petersburg he ordains a great triumphal procession to bring the captured ships with their admirals and officers up the Neva. At this time he transfers the Senate from Moscow to Petersburg, established assemblies, at which the penalty for infringement of the rules and regulations is to "empty the great eagle, a huge bowl, filled with wine and brandy," institutes the Academy of Arts and Sciences, founds the public library commenced with the one captured ("conveyed, the wise it call") from the University at Abo, sends a mission through Siberia to China, and draws up a map of his dominions, much of it with his own hand.

In 1715, after taking Stralsund, completing the conquest of Finland and Esthonia, and commanding in person the allied fleets of England, Denmark, and Russia, he makes a second tour in Europe, accompanied by Catharine. He revisits Saardam, where he is received with great enthusiasm, is entertained with great distinction in Paris, and visits the tomb of Cardinal Richelieu, where he exclaims, dropping upon his knees, "Thou great man, I would have given thee half my dominions to have learned of thee to govern the other half." He drew up with his own hand a treaty of commerce with France, and returned through Berlin to Petersburg. The letters of the Margravine of Baireuth from Berlin present no very flattering picture of the imperial travellers. She describes Peter as dressed plainly in a naval costume, handsome, but rude, uncouth, and of dreadful aspect; and Catharine as fat, frouzy, and vulgar, needing only to be seen to betray her obscure origin, and bedizened with chains, orders, and holy relics, "making such a *Geklinkklank* as if an ass with bells were coming along"; she represents them both as intolerable beggars, plundering the palace of everything they could lay their hands on.

Peter had long ago constituted himself the head of the Church, and treated with contempt the pretensions of the prelates to temporal power. When at Paris, however, he had received an elaborate petition from the Sorbonne, the object of which was to effect a reunion between the Greek and Latin Churches. But the despot who had constituted himself the head, hand, heart, and conscience of his people — who had annihilated throughout his empire every element of power adverse to his own — who had crushed the soldiery, the nobility, and the clergy, deposed the Patriarch, and constituted himself the high priest of his empire — was not

very likely to comply with the Sorbonne's invitation to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope in his dominions. Nevertheless, he received their petition with great politeness.

On his return to Petersburg, he was vexed by the importunity of some of his own clergy, who clamoured for the appointment of a Patriarch, on the ground that it was demanded by the people, and that it was necessary to assert the dignity and independence of the Greek Church. Now there happened to be about Petersburg one Sotoff, a venerable jester of eighty-four, who had been the Czar's writing-master in his younger years, and at the age of seventy had been advanced to the dignity of buffoon. This venerable individual the Czar fixes upon for the office of Patriarch, previously creating him a prince and a pope. In order to make the office of Patriarch completely ridiculous in the eyes of the people, and to give them a little innocent recreation at the same time, he now ordains a solemn marriage between this Patriarch and a "buxum widow of thirty-four." We must ask indulgence while we quote a short description of this funny ceremony from the old author already cited:

"The nuptials of this extraordinary couple were solemnized by the court in masks or mock show. The company consisted of about four hundred persons of both sexes. Every four persons had their proper dress and peculiar musical instruments, so that they represented a hundred different sorts of habits and music, particularly of the Asiatic nations. The four persons appointed to invite the guests were the greatest stammerers that could be found in all Russia. Old, decrepit men, who were not able to walk or stand, had been picked out to serve for bridesmen, stewards, and waiters. There were four running footmen, the most unwieldy fellows, who had been troubled with the gout most of their lives, and were so fat and bulky that they wanted others to lead them. The mock Czar of Moscow, who represented King David in his dress, instead of a harp, had a lyre with a bear-skin to play upon. He, being the chief of the company, was carried on a sort of a pageant placed on a sled, to the four corners of which were tied as many bears, which, being pricked with goads by fellows purposely appointed for it, made such a frightful roaring as well suited the confused and horrible din raised by the disagreeing instruments of the rest of the company. The Czar himself was dressed like a boor of Friesland, and skillfully beat a drum in company with three generals. In this manner, bells ringing everywhere, the ill-matched couple were attended by the masks to the altar of the great church, where they were joined in matrimony by a priest a hundred years old, who had lost his eyesight and his memory; to supply which defect a pair of spectacles were put upon his nose, two candles held before his eyes, and the words sounded into his ears, which he was to pronounce. From church the procession went to the Czar's palace, where the diversion lasted some days.

Many strange adventures and comical accidents happened on their riding-sleds through the streets, too long to be related here. Thus much may suffice to show that the Czar, among all the heavy cares of government, knew how to set apart some days for the relaxation of his mind, and how ingenious he was in the contrivance of those diversions."

We confess that we are unable to agree with the grave conclusion of the author from whom we quote. To us this "ingenious diversion" seems about as sorry a jest as we ever heard of. However, it was considered "most admirable fooling" in Moscow, and, at all events, after two or three repetitions, seems to have quite cured the people of their desire for Patriarchs.

"The Czar," says Voltaire, "thus laughingly avenged twenty Emperors of Germany, ten Kings of France, and a host of sovereigns. This was all the fruit which the Sorbonne gathered from their not very politic idea of reuniting the Greek and Latin Churches.

The darkest chapter in the life of Peter now approaches. After the lapse of a century, no one can read the account of that dreadful tragedy, the trial, condemnation, and death of the Czarevitch Alexis, without a shudder of horror. No one can contemplate the spectacle of a son judicially condemned by his father for no crime — no one can read the record of the solemn farce which represents the trial of the unfortunate victim without feeling all his admiration for the extraordinary qualities of the Czar swallowed up by indignation and abhorrence. Up to this time Peter seems a man — a hard-hearted, despotic, inexorable man, perhaps — but he is still human. He now seems only a machine, a huge engine of unparalleled power, placed upon the earth to effect a certain task, working its mighty arms night and day with ceaseless and untiring energy, crashing through all obstacles, and annihilating everything in its path with the unfeeling precision of gigantic mechanism.

It was hardly to be expected, to be sure, that this tremendous despot, who had recoiled before no obstacle in the path of his settled purpose, who had strode over everything with the step of a giant, who had given two seas to an inland empire, who had conquered the most warlike nation and sovereign of Europe with barbarians in petticoats, who had crushed the nobility, annihilated the Janizaries, trampled the Patriarch in the dust — who had repudiated his wife because she was attached to the old customs of Muscovy, and had married and crowned a pastry-cook's mistress because it was his sovereign will and pleasure — it was hardly to be expected that such a man would hesitate about disinheriting his own son if he thought proper to do so. But it might have been hoped that he would content himself with disinheriting him, and that the "Pater Patriæ," as by solemn decree he was shortly afterward entitled, would remember that he was also father of Alexis.

This unhappy young man, the son of the repudiated wife of the Czar,

seems to have been a very miserable creature. We have the fullest sympathy with the natural disappointment of Peter at the incorrigible, hopeless stupidity and profligacy of his son. Still, he had himself to blame in a great measure for many of his son's defects. His education had been neglected, or rather, worse than neglected; it had been left to the care of monks, to the care of the very order of people most wedded to the ancient state of things, and most desirous of restoring it if possible. The necessary result of such training upon a dull boy might easily have been foreseen. There was, however, not the slightest objection to disinheriting him; he had no claim to the throne, and he was totally unworthy of it. There was no law of Russia designating the eldest son as successor. On the contrary, the genius of the Russian autocracy seems to vest the fee simple of all the Russias and all the Russians in the actual autocrat, to be disposed of as he sees fit, and devised to whomsoever he deems most eligible. This had been, and was then, the law, if it be worth while to talk about law when the will of the sovereign makes and alters the law at any moment. Alexis seems to have been weak, dissolute, and intriguing — a sot, a bigot, a liar, and a coward — the tool of "bushy bearded" priests and designing women, whose control of the empire had been terminated by Peter's energetic measures. The Czar's predominating fear was that at his death the empire would relapse into the quagmire of barbarism from which he had reclaimed it. Alexis, priest-ridden and ignorant, was sure to become a tool in the hands of priests as soon as he should ascend the throne, and the old order of things would as surely be reinstated.

Peter, soon after the death of his son's wife (a virtuous and intelligent German princess, whose life seems to have been worn out by the neglect, cruelty, and debauchery of her husband), remonstrates with him upon his evil courses, commands him to reform, and threatens else to disinherit him. "Amend your life, or else turn monk," says the Czar. "I intend to embrace the monastic life," replies the son; "I pledge myself to do so, and only ask your gracious permission." The Czar, just before his departure for Germany and France, visits Alexis, who was, or pretended to be, confined to his bed by sickness. The young man again renews his renunciation of the succession and repeats his pledge to become a monk. Peter bids him take six months to consider the matter, takes an affectionate farewell of him, and sets out upon his travels. As soon as his back is turned, Alexis realizes the old distich:

*"The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;
The devil got well, the devil a monk was he."*

He recovers his health instantaneously, and celebrates his father's departure by getting very drunk with a select party of friends. Seven months afterward the Czar writes to him to join him at Copenhagen, if he had determined to reform his life and make himself fit for the succession; if

not, to execute his monastic plans without delay. Alexis accordingly announces his intention of going to Copenhagen, draws a heavy bill on Menshikoff for his travelling expenses, leaves Moscow, and, instead of Copenhagen, sneaks off to Vienna. The Emperor of Germany, however, turns him off, and he goes to Naples. Two envoys of the Czar, Tolstoy and Romanzoff, proceed to Naples and induce him, by ample promises of forgiveness on the part of his father, to return. The following is a part of his father's letter:

"I write to you for the last time, to tell you that you are to execute my will, which Tolstoy and Romanzoff will announce to you on my part. *If you obey me, I assure you and I promise, in the name of God, that I will not punish you, and that, if you return, I will love you more than ever*; but if you do not, I give you as your father, in virtue of the power which I have received from God, my eternal curse; and as your sovereign, I assure you that I shall find the means of punishing you; in which I hope that God will assist me, and that he will take just cause in his hand."

Upon the faith of this sacred promise Alexis accompanies the two emissaries to Moscow, where they arrive on the 13th of February, 1718. The day after his arrival, the Czar, by way of keeping his promise of pardoning and loving him more than ever, calls a grand council of the Senate and all the dignitaries of the empire, and there, in the most solemn, formal, and authentic manner, disinherits Alexis, deprives him of all claim to the succession, and obliges him, and all those present, to take oath of future allegiance to his and Catharine's son Peter, then an infant, who, however, shortly afterward died. This was the beginning of the fulfilment of his promise; but it was only the beginning of the end. Alexis was worthless, ignorant, stupid, and depraved; but he had committed no crime, and deserved no punishment, certainly not the punishment of death. A comfortable state of things there would be in the world, if every man who happened to have a profligate dunce of a son were to be justified in cutting his head off; and for an autocrat and high priest to do so seems to us a thousand times more atrocious.

However, the Czar seems to have been determined, after his first evasion, to get rid of him, and accordingly produces the charge of a conspiracy. Alexis is formally accused of conspiring against his father's life and throne, and a pack of perfectly contemptible stuff is collected together to make what was called evidence; it consisted of confessions of his mistress, his pot-companions, and his confessor—all upon the rack—that he had been known to express wishes for his father's death, and to throw out hints about receiving assistance, in a certain event, from the Emperor of Germany. But in the whole mess of it there is not the faintest shadow of a shade of evidence that he had ever conspired, that he had ever entertained any design against his father; and the necessary

result, upon any candid mind, of a perusal of the evidence is a conviction of his perfect innocence of the crime charged upon him. There is not a country in the world where there is any pretence of administering justice, in which such an accusation, supported by such evidence, would not have been hooted out of court. Still, the accusation was made, and something which they called a trial was instituted. The Prince is sworn upon the Holy Evangelists to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and he immediately begins to utter lies by the wholesale. His weak intellect seems to have been possessed and disordered by one idea — that if he should confess a great deal more than was expected, and make himself out much more guilty than he was supposed to be, he should perhaps obtain his pardon. Having, however, done nothing criminal, and having said nothing that could be fairly considered suspicious, he dives into the bottom of his breast, and brings up and displays his most secret thoughts by way of self-accusation. The truth seems to have been that he was bullied to the last degree. We know the Czar to have been a man who eminently inspired awe, and Alexis was of an uncommonly sneaking disposition. As the event proved, Peter absolutely frightened his son to death. Certainly, never were the forms of judicial investigation so outraged as in this trial. The details are sickening, and we have already transgressed the indulgence of our readers. Let one or two questions, made by the prosecution, and answered by the criminal in writing, suffice as specimens of the Czar's criminal jurisprudence:

"When you saw, in the letter of Beyer" (a gossiping envoy from the German Emperor's court, who wrote to his sovereign all the news, true or false, as fast as he picked it up), "that there was a revolt in the army of Mecklenburg, you were rejoiced; I believe that you had some view, and that you would have declared for the rebels, even in my lifetime." The answer of Alexis is, "*If the rebels had called me in your lifetime, I should probably have joined them, supposing that they had been strong enough.*" In answer to another question, he avows that "he had accused himself before God, in confession to the priest Jacques, of having wished the death of his father; and that the confessor Jacques had replied: "'God will pardon you for it; we all wish it as much.'"

After this farce of a trial had been enacted, the Czar, waiving his prerogative of life and death, determined to submit the case to the judgment of the clergy, judges, and high officers of state. This always seemed to us very paltry. It was an attempt to shift the responsibility of the murder off his own shoulders, where only it belonged. The council of clergy, after recognizing the Czar's power — *jus vitæ et necis* — which nobody ever doubted, and citing several cases from the Old Testament, recommended mercy, relying principally upon Absalom's case. It was plain they washed their hands of it. Meantime, further investigations, it was pretended, had made the matter worse; and, on the 5th of July,

the ministers, senators, and generals unanimously condemn the Prince to death, leaving the sentence, of course, open to the Czar's revision, and prescribing no particular mode of execution. The sentence of death is published, Alexis is informed of it, and seems literally to have been frightened to death by it; for, while the Czar was deliberating what course to take (and the opinion of the most indulgent — we confess not ours — seems to be that he did not intend the execution of the sentence), the unfortunate young man was carried off by a kind of apoplectic seizure, and, on the 7th of July, died contrite, receiving the sacrament and extreme unction, and imploring his father's pardon.

This account seems to be now accepted as the true one. But the Marquis de Custine, in his greediness to devour everything that blackens the character of Russia in general, and of Peter the Great in particular, could not, of course, fail to reproduce the stories that have been told and retold, exploded and re-exploded — and which will continue, we suppose, to be told and exploded, believed in and ridiculed, to the end of time. It was not believed by many people in Europe at the time, and it is not believed by the Comte de Ségur and the Marquis de Custine now, that the Prince died a natural death — if the cataleptic convulsive fit, consequent upon extreme and protracted mental agony, which finally ended his life, can be called a natural and not a violent death. All sorts of stories were told at the time, each more incredible than the other, and each disproving the other. The Czar was said to have knouted him to death with his own hands — to have poisoned him with a potion which he sent Marshal Weyde to an apothecary's shop in broad daylight to procure — to have cut off his head, and then to have had it privately sewed on again by Madame Cramer — in short, to have made away with him by a variety of means, all of which could not well have been true, and all of which are, under the circumstances, extremely unlikely. To us it seems ridiculous to add a new horror to this terrible tragedy. We are not sure, either, that the supposed assassination makes the matter any worse. "Murder most foul as at the best it is," we are unable to see that the private murder is a whit more atrocious than the public, solemn, and judicial murder of which the Czar stands accused and condemned to all eternity.

It certainly does not seem to have been in Peter's nature to have taken his son off by poison, or in any private way. The autocrat was a man who gloried in his own actions, in displaying the tremendous, irresistible power of his own will. He had collected all the dignity of his empire to assist at the spectacle; he had invoked the attention of all Europe to the tragedy he proposed to enact; he had determined to execute his son, and he did intend, we have no doubt, to murder him in the most ceremonious manner, and for the good of his country. We have not a doubt of his motives; he thought himself actuated by the purest philanthropy;

but these expansive bosoms, which embrace the whole earth, or a third of it, in their colossal affection, are apt to be deficient in the humbler virtues of love and charity when it comes to detail. The truth was, Peter loved his country so well that he determined to sacrifice his son to its welfare; in other words, his heart was as hard as the nether millstone, and he would have sacrificed twenty thousand sons rather than have been thwarted in the cherished projects of his ambitious intellect. But we confess we can conceive of no motive for the alleged assassination. It was not in the character of the Emperor, and it was a piece of stupidity as well as barbarity. "If the assassination had trammelled up the consequence" of all that preceded, "then it were well"; and the deed might have been possible. But the broken faith to his son, the atrocious trial, the deliberate condemnation, could in no manner have been obliterated from the minds of men by the "deep damnation" of a secret "taking off." He had announced to the world his intention of executing his son for alleged disobedience and conspiracy; he had sent to every court in Europe copies of the judicial proceedings, ending in the condemnation of the victim; he had been publicly brandishing the sword of justice over his son's neck, and calling upon the world to witness the spectacle; and why he should have made all this parade for the mere purpose of poisoning him, knouting him, or cutting his head off in secret, seems inexplicable.

Besides, as Voltaire very strongly urges, the different kinds of assassination alleged disprove each other, and the fact that Alexis was never alone from the moment of the condemnation to the hour of his death makes any secret execution impossible. The knouting story has not found many advocates; the poisoning and the beheading are supported about equally and are both about equally probable. It certainly was not probable that the Czar would have sent a high officer of court to fetch the poison, and a few minutes afterward have dispatched another messenger to bid the first make great haste. This is not exactly the way in which poisoning is usually managed. And the other story, that the young man's head was cut off and then sewed on again, is so ludicrous that it would deserve no attention but for the number of writers who have reported it upon the authority of contemporaneous gossip. At what moment the Czar found a secret opportunity to cut the head off — how Madam Cramer found a secret opportunity to sew it on again — how this ingenious lady, who, we suppose, had not practised this kind of needlework as a profession, was able to fit it on so adroitly as to deceive not only the whole court but even the patient himself, for, as far as we can understand the story, Alexis seems to have received extreme unction and the sacrament, in presence of about a hundred witnesses, after Mrs. Cramer's job was finished — are all matters very difficult to explain. Moreover, as we have already observed, we do not see much greater atrocity in the one case than in the other. Peter's will being the only law of the land, he could do what he

chose, execute his son as he chose, and by his own hand if he chose. The only law which could have any binding force over the autocrat was the law of nature, and that, to his soul of granite, was weaker than the spider's web. He was determined to sacrifice his son to the welfare of his country, and to insure the continuance of his reformation in church and state. Sacrifices of this sort have always found advocates and admirers, and are sure to be repeated on great occasions, and at rare intervals, to the end of time.

Dismissing this painful subject, we hasten to conclude this imperfect sketch of the principal events in the Czar's history. We will not dwell upon the extraordinary but abortive intrigues of the two arch-plotters of Europe, Cardinal Alberoni and Baron Görtz, by which the Czar and the Swedish monarch were to be reconciled and combined in a plot against George I of England, and in favour of the Pretender. A chance bullet from "a petty fortress and a dubious hand" at Frederikshald, in Norway, terminates at once the life of Charles and the intrigues of Görtz. The Baron, instead of taking the crown from George's head, loses his own head at Stockholm; Alberoni is turned out of Spain; and the Czar remains *in statu quo*, having been careful throughout the whole intrigue, which was perfectly well known in England, to make the most barefaced promises of eternal friendship to the house of Hanover; and "to reiterate," as the diplomatists say, "the assurances of his distinguished consideration" for the English King all the time that he was plotting against his throne.

The death of Charles alters the complexion of Europe. Peace, which was hardly possible during his lifetime, becomes the immediate object of all parties. The Prince of Hesse, husband of Queen Ulrica, and, by cession of his wife, King of Sweden, is desirous of peace upon almost any terms which will allow of an honourable repose to his exhausted and impoverished country. Peter, having obtained possession of all the provinces he required, is ready to sheathe the sword on receiving proper recognition of his title to the property thus acquired; and accordingly, after a good deal of bravado upon the Baltic between the English and Russian fleets, and the burning of some fifty or sixty Swedish villages, innumerable châteaux, and fifteen or twenty thousand houses, in a descent made by the Russians upon the coasts of Sweden, the war, which continues with ferocity during all the negotiations for peace, is at last brought to a conclusion by the signing of the treaty of Neustadt, on September 10, 1721. By this treaty of peace, the Czar is guaranteed in the possession of Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, Carelia, Viborg, and the many adjacent islands, and thus reaps the reward of twenty years' hard labour; receiving, moreover, from the Senate and Synod, by solemn decree—what seems insipid homage for an autocrat—the titles of Great, Emperor, and *Pater Patriæ*.

After an interval of two years, passed in establishing woollen, paper, and glass manufactories, embellishing his capital, and regulating the internal and foreign commerce of Russia, we suddenly find him, accompanied by the faithful Catharine, descending the Volga at the head of a large army. A revolution which had broken out in Persia, in the course of which the reigning sovereign, the imbecile Hussein, finds himself hard pressed by the Afghan prince, Meer Mahmoud, offers an opportunity to Peter to possess himself of a few maritime provinces on the Caspian, to console him for the loss of Azov consequent upon the disaster of the Pruth. A few hundred Russians, engaged in commerce at the town of Shamakia, having been cut to pieces during some of the hostile movements, he finds therein a pretext for invading Persia, and requiring satisfaction from both sovereign and rebel. Failing in this, of course, he sails from Astrakhan to Derbent, which town he takes possession of, and, soon afterward, being applied to by the unhappy Sophi for protection against the Afghans, he consents to afford it, in consideration of receiving the towns of Baku and Derbent, together with the provinces of Ghilan, Mazanderan, and Astrabad. "It is not land I want, but water," exclaims the Czar, as he snatches these sunny provinces, the whole southern coast of the Caspian, the original kingdom of Cyrus, from the languid hand of the Persian, without the expenditure of the blood, time, and treasure which it had cost him to wrest the frozen swamps of Finland from the iron grasp of Charles.

Peter's conquests are now concluded. The Russian colossus now stands astride, from the "thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice" on the Baltic to the "fragrant bowers of Astrabad" on the Caspian, with a foot upon either sea. The man who had begun to gratify his passion for maritime affairs by paddling a little skiff on the Yausa, and who became on his accession only the barbaric sovereign of an inland and unknown country, now finds himself the lord of two seas, with a considerable navy, built almost by his own hand. It was upon his return to Petersburg from his Persian expedition, that he ordered the very skiff in which he commenced navigation to be brought from Moscow, and took occasion to give to his court an entertainment which was called the "consecration of the Little Grandsire," that being the name he had given to the skiff. At the time of this ceremony of the consecration, the progeny of the Little Grandsire numbered already, according to the returns of the admiralty, "forty-one ships of the line, in a condition for service at sea, carrying twenty-one hundred and six guns, manned with fourteen thousand nine hundred sea-men, besides a proportionate number of frigates, galleys, and other smaller craft." The little cabin which was Peter's house while building Petersburg, still stands upon what is now called the Citadel; it is consecrated as a chapel, filled with votive offerings, and enclosed with a brick wall, and the Little Grandsire is religiously preserved within the building.

We are certainly not taken in by the colossal puerility of the Russian marine any more than the Marquis de Custine is; and, although the descendants of the Little Grandsire are now at least double the number they were at the time of the consecration, we have not heard of any very brilliant exploits on any ocean to justify the very imposing and very Roman *rostra* which decorate the exchange at Petersburg. To use a vulgar but expressive phrase, the Russian navy has not yet set the Baltic on fire, and we doubt if it ever will. If it could thaw a little, it would be all the better; for, Cronstadt being blockaded by ice six months in the year, the navy is only paraded during the pleasant weather for the amusement of the autocrat. As long as England stands where it does, and the Russian winter remains as it is, we shall hardly fear much from the descendants of the Little Grandsire, at least till the capital is shifted to the Bosphorus.

At the same time we are far from agreeing with the Marquis de Custine in his sweeping condemnation of Peter's policy in building Petersburg and establishing a marine. It was a thousand times better to have the Black Sea and the Baltic than nothing; and if his successors had taken half as much pains as himself in fostering the maritime trade of the country, and if Russia, instead of all this parade of ships of the line, frigates and steamers, could create a mercantile marine for itself, and could manage to own considerable foreign trade, now monopolized by foreign vessels, principally the English, she might still obtain the germ of a maritime population while waiting for Constantinople. But till she learns that the strength of a navy consists in sailors and not ships she is not likely to be a very formidable power upon the ocean, let her build as many line-of-battle ships as she chooses.

The only other interesting incident in Peter's life, which now draws rapidly to its close, was the coronation of Catharine as Empress consort. This event was celebrated with extraordinary pomp, and particular stress is laid in the Emperor's proclamation upon her conduct in the affair of the Pruth, and the salvation of himself and his army is attributed to her heroism and presence of mind. There seems to be little doubt that Peter intended this solemn coronation of the Empress during his lifetime — a ceremony which was not usual in Russia — to be an indication of his intention that she should succeed to the throne upon his death.

Very soon after this, having exposed himself when in a feeble state of health by standing in the water a long time and over-exerting himself in saving the lives of some sailors and soldiers who were near being wrecked in a storm upon the Gulf of Finland, he was attacked by a painful disorder, to which he had been subject during the latter years of his life, and expired with calmness and resignation on the 28th of January, 1725. His sufferings during his last illness had been so intense that he was unable to make any intelligible disposition as to the succession; and, strange to say, the possessor of this mighty empire, of which the only

fundamental law was the expressed will of the sovereign, died intestate. It is in the highest degree probable that he had intended to appoint his wife as his successor; at any rate, assisted by the promptness of Menshikoff and her own resolution, Catharine ascended the throne without opposition.

The disorder which thus cut off the Czar in the fifty-fourth year of his age was an acute inflammation of the intestines and bladder; but, as a matter of course, his death was attributed to poison. We do not observe that the Marquis de Custine has revived this story, which is a matter of surprise to us, particularly as we believe that his friend the Comte de Ségur has adopted it in his history. The temptation to damage the character of the Empress, and to represent her to posterity as an adulteress and a poisoner, was too strong to be resisted by the contemporary chroniclers. Lamberti gives us a detailed account of an intrigue of Catharine with one of her chamberlains, a melodramatic discovery made by Peter in an arbour, and a consequent determination upon his part to shut her up for life in a convent. She escaped her fate, according to the same faithful historian, in a singular manner. Peter, it appears, kept a memorandum-book, and was in the habit of making daily minutes of everything he proposed to do; while one of Catharine's pages was in the habit of secretly bringing his Majesty's tablets from his dressing-room for the daily inspection of the Empress. The intended imprisonment of Catharine, jotted down among other memoranda, was thus revealed to her, whereupon she incontinently poisoned him. This story has been sufficiently disproved. It is hardly worth disproving; for it is not probable that a man who had suddenly made this discovery of the guilt of a woman who had just been crowned an empress, and whom he had now determined to imprison for life, instead of designating her as his successor, would require to make any memorandum of the matter. And yet we are expected to believe that an entry was found upon Peter's tablets almost literally to this effect: "*Mem.* To repudiate my wife, shave her head, and lock her up in a convent"; as if otherwise the matter would have slipped his memory. How is it possible that our friend De Custine has allowed this story to escape him?

In the vast square of the Admiralty at St. Petersburg stands the celebrated colossal statue of Peter the Great. Around him are palaces, academies, arsenals, gorgeous temples with their light and starry cupolas floating up like painted balloons, and tall spires sheathed in gold, and flashing like pillars of fire. This place, which is large enough for half the Russian army to encamp in, is bounded upon one side by the Admiralty building, the Winter Palace, and the Hermitage, the façades of the three extending more than a mile; in front of the Winter Palace rises the red, polished granite column of Alexander, the largest monolith in the world;

from the side opposite the palace radiate three great streets lined with stately and imposing buildings, thronged with population, and intersected by canals which are all bridged with iron; across the square, on the side opposite the statue, stands the Isaac's Church, built of marble, bronze, granite, and gold, and standing upon a subterranean forest, more than a million large trees having been driven into the earth to form its foundation. The Emperor faces the Neva, which pours its limpid waters through quays of solid granite, which for twenty-five miles line its length and that of its branches; and beyond the river rise in full view the Bourse, the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and other imposing public edifices.

This equestrian statue has been much admired; we think justly so. The action of the horse is uncommonly spirited and striking, and the position of the Emperor dignified and natural. He waves his hand, as if, like a Scythian wizard as he was, he had just caused this mighty, swarming city, with all its palaces and temples, to rise like a vapour from the frozen morasses of the Neva with one stroke of his wand. In winter, by moonlight, when the whole scene is lighted by the still, cold radiance of a polar midnight, we defy anyone to pause and gaze upon that statue without a vague sensation of awe. The Czar seems to be still presiding in sculptured silence over the colossal work of his hand; to be still protecting his capital from the inundations of the ocean, and his empire from the flood of barbarism, which he always feared would sweep over it upon his death.

"How shall we rank him upon glory's page?"

It is impossible not to admire his genius, his indomitable energy, his unconquerable will. He proposed to himself, while yet a youth, the mighty task of civilizing his country, and of converting a mongrel Asiatic empire into a powerful European state. It is difficult to place one's self in the right position to judge him correctly. We are very far from agreeing with the Marquis de Custine, that his mistake was in importing his civilization. Russia had waited in vain quite long enough for the spontaneous and indigenous germination of the arts and sciences. Besides in these days when steam is so rapidly approximating and assimilating the different parts of the earth to each other, when railroads are opened to the Red Sea, and steamers paddle by the Garden of Eden, it is difficult to say what nation will long retain a peculiar and appropriate civilization of its own. That the Czar opened the door to Europe and the ocean, that he erected a granite portal, a triumphal arch, upon his western frontier, is to us his greatest merit. If Russia is to be civilized, it must be through the influence of the West; if Russia is to be free, the hymn of liberty will never be wafted to her ears from the silent deserts of Asia, or the sepulchral stillness of China. The Emperor did right to

descend from his Slavonic throne, and to go abroad to light the torch of civilization in more favoured lands.

But while we admire the concentration of purpose which sustained him throughout his labours, we can not help deploring the great and fundamental mistake which made them all comparatively worthless. A despot by birth, education, and temperament, he had never the most glimmering notion of the existence of a people. In Russia, then and at this day, there is not even the fiction of a people. Peter had a correct idea of the proper sources of civilization: he knew where and how to collect the seeds; but he forgot that there was nobody to civilize. A people may be humanized, cultivated, brought to any degree of perfection in arts, and arms, and sciences; but he undertook to civilize a state in which there was but one man, and that man himself. The root must grow before the branches and the foliage. Of this the autocrat had no idea. He had already annihilated the only class which was not composed of slaves. With one stroke of his sceptre he had demolished the feudal nobility, or what corresponded in a degree to the feudal nobility of Europe, and had made all social rank throughout his empire to depend upon service to himself. What was accomplished at a later day in western Europe, in the midst of long convulsions and struggles, by the upheaving of the democracy, was effected by the autocrat at a blow. This was a fatal error. There were slaves enough before. It was unnecessary to degrade the nobles. But, the more closely we analyse Peter's character, the more cogently we are compelled to conclude that his actuating motive was rather his own fame than the good of his country. A great peculiarity of his ambition was that, though possessed of eminent military talents and highly successful in his campaigns, he seems to have cared but little for the *certaminis gaudia*; to have taken but small delight in battles and victories for themselves; to have cared little for conquest, beyond what he required for his settled purpose. Conquering, he never aspires to be a conqueror; victorious over the greatest general of the age, he is ready to sheathe his sword as soon as the object of the contest is attained. His ambition was to be a founder, and he never, in victory or defeat, was once turned aside from his purpose. He was determined to advance his empire to the ocean, to create a new capital, and to implant there and throughout his empire the elements of European civilization. If his ambition had flown a little higher, had he determined to regenerate his people, the real civilization of his empire would have followed sooner than it is now likely to do. Of this he probably never dreamed. He was a despot throughout. He might have found other matters in England worthy of his attention, other institutions as intimately connected with civilization as the English naval architecture; but he appears to have been completely indifferent to the great spectacle presented to an autocrat by a constitutional kingdom. "Are these all lawyers?" said he, one day, when

visiting the courts at Westminster. "What can be the use of so many lawyers? I have but two in my empire, and I mean to hang one of them as soon as I get back." He certainly might as well have hung them both; a country without law has very little need of lawyers.

It was because his country was inhabited by slaves, and not by a people, that it was necessary, in every branch of his great undertaking, to go into such infinitesimal details. Our admiration of the man's power is, to be sure, increased by a contemplation of the extraordinary versatility of his genius, its wide grasp, and its minute perception; but we regret to see so much elephantine labour thrown away. As he felt himself to be the only man in the empire, so in his power of labour he rises to a demigod, a Hercules. He felt that he must do everything himself, and he did everything. He fills every military post, from drummer to general, from cabin-boy to admiral: with his own hand he builds ships of the line, and navigates them himself in storm and battle; he superintends every manufactory, every academy, every hospital, every prison; with his own hand he pulls teeth and draws up commercial treaties — wins all his battles with his own sword, at the head of his army, and sings in the choir as chief bishop and head of his church — models all his forts, sounds all his harbours, draws maps of his own dominions, all with his own hand — regulates the treasury of his empire and the account-books of his shopkeepers, teaches his subjects how to behave themselves in assemblies, prescribes the length of their coat-skirts, and dictates their religious creed. If, instead of contenting himself with slaves who only aped civilization, he had striven to create a people capable and worthy of culture, he might have spared himself all these minute details; he would have produced less striking, instantaneous effects, but his work would have been more durable, and his fame more elevated. His was one of the monarch minds, who coin their age and stamp it with their image and superscription; but his glory would have been greater if he had thought less of himself, and more of the real interests of his country. If he had attempted to convert his subjects from cattle into men, he need not have been so eternally haunted by the phantom of returning barbarism, destroying after his death all the labour of his lifetime, and which he could exorcise only by shedding the blood of his son. Viewed from this position, his colossal grandeur dwindles. It seems to us that he might have been so much more, that his possibilities seem to dwarf his actual achievements. He might have been the creator and the lawgiver of a people. He was, after all, only a tyrant and a city-builder. Even now, his successors avert their eyes from the West. The city of his love is already in danger from more potent elements than water. New and dangerous ideas fly through that magnificent western gateway. When the portal is closed, the keys thrown into the Baltic, and the discarded Moscow again embraced, how much fruit will be left from the foreign seeds transplanted? When the Byzantine Empire is restored, perhaps we shall see their ripened de-

velopment; the Russians of the Lower Empire will be a match for the Greeks who preceded them.

Still, we repeat, it is difficult to judge him justly. He seems to have felt a certain mission confided to him by a superior power. His object he accomplished without wavering, without precipitation, without delay. We look up to him as to a giant, as we see him striding over every adversary, over every obstacle in his path. He seems in advance of his country, of his age, of himself. In his exterior he is the great prince, conqueror, reformer; in his interior, the Muscovite, the barbarian. He was conscious of it himself. "I wish to reform my empire," he exclaimed, upon one occasion, "and I cannot reform myself." In early life his pleasures were of the grossest character; he was a hard drinker, and was quarrelsome in his cups. He kicked and cuffed his ministers, on one occasion was near cutting the throat of Lefort in a paroxysm of drunken anger, and was habitually caning Prince Menshikoff. But, after all, he did reform himself, and, in the latter years of his life, his habits were abstemious and simple, and his days and nights were passed in labours for his country and his fame.

It is difficult to judge him justly. Perhaps it would have been impossible to have planted even the germ of civil or even social liberty in such a wilderness as Russia was at his accession. It was something to lift her ever so little above the waves of barbarism, where he found her, "many fathoms deep." He accomplished a great deal. He made Russia a maritime country, gave her a navy and a commercial capital, and quadrupled her revenue; he destroyed the Strelitzes, he crushed the Patriarch, he abolished the monastic institutions of his empire. If he had done nothing else, he would, for these great achievements, deserve the eternal gratitude of his country.

FREDERIC THE GREAT

1712-1786

By THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY¹ (1800-1859)



THIS work, which has the high honour of being introduced to the world by the author of *Lockiel* and *Hohenlinden*, is not wholly unworthy of so distinguished a chaperon. It professes, indeed, to be no more than a compilation: but it is an exceedingly amusing compilation, and we shall be glad to have more of it. The narrative comes down at present only to the commencement of the Seven Years' War, and therefore does not comprise the most interesting portion of Frederic's reign.

It may not be unacceptable to our readers that we should take this opportunity of presenting them with a slight sketch of the life of the greatest king that has, in modern times, succeeded by right of birth to a throne. It may, we fear, be impossible to compress so long and eventful a story within the limits which we must prescribe to ourselves. Should we be compelled to break off, we may perhaps, when the continuation of this work appears, return to the subject.

The Prussian monarchy, the youngest of the great European states, but in population and revenue the fifth among them, and in art, science, and civilization entitled to the third, if not to the second place, sprang from a humble origin. About the beginning of the fifteenth century, the marquisate of Brandenburg was bestowed by the Emperor Sigismund on the noble family of Hohenzollern. In the sixteenth century that family embraced the Lutheran doctrines. It obtained from the King of Poland, early in the seventeenth century, the investiture of the duchy of Prussia. Even after this accession of territory, the chiefs of the house of Hohenzollern hardly ranked with the Electors of Saxony and Bavaria. The soil of Brandenburg was for the most part sterile. Even round Berlin, the capital of the province, and round Potsdam, the favourite residence of the Margraves, the country was a desert. In some places, the deep sand could with difficulty be forced by assiduous tillage to yield thin crops of rye and oats. In other places, the ancient forests, from which the conquerors of the Roman Empire had descended on the Danube, remained untouched by the hand of man. Where the soil was rich it was generally marshy, and its insalubrity repelled the cultivators whom its fertility

¹ Reprinted from the *Essays*, this paper originally appeared (1842) in a periodical, as a review of Thomas Campbell's *Frederic the Great and His Times*.

attracted. Frederic William, called the Great Elector, was the prince to whose policy his successors have agreed to ascribe their greatness. He acquired by the peace of Westphalia several valuable possessions, and among them the rich city and district of Magdeburg; and he left to his son Frederic a principality as considerable as any which was not called a kingdom.

Frederic aspired to the style of royalty. Ostentatious and profuse, negligent of his true interests and of his high duties, insatiably eager for frivolous distinctions, he added nothing to the real weight of the state which he governed; perhaps he transmitted his inheritance to his children impaired rather than augmented in value; but he succeeded in gaining the great object of his life, the title of King. In the year 1700 he assumed this new dignity, He had on that occasion to undergo all the mortifications which fall to the lot of ambitious upstarts. Compared with the other crowned heads of Europe, he made a figure resembling that which a Nabob or a Commissary, who had bought a title, would make in the Company of Peers whose ancestors had been attainted for treason against the Plantagenets, the envy of the class which Frederic quitted, and the civil scorn of the class into which he intruded himself, were marked in very significant ways. The Elector of Saxony at first refused to acknowledge the new Majesty. Lewis the Fourteenth looked down on his brother King with an air not unlike that with which the Count in Molière's play regards Monsieur Jourdain, just fresh from the mummery of being made a gentleman. Austria exacted large sacrifices in return for her recognition, and at last gave it ungraciously.

Frederic was succeeded by his son, Frederic William, a prince who must be allowed to have possessed some talents for administration, but whose character was disfigured by odious vices, and whose eccentricities were such as had never before been seen out of a madhouse. He was exact and diligent in the transacting of business; and he was the first who formed the design of obtaining for Prussia a place among the European powers, altogether out of proportion to her extent and population, by means of a strong military organization. Strict economy enabled him to keep up a peace establishment of sixty thousand troops. These troops were disciplined in such a manner, that, placed beside them, the household regiments of Versailles and St. James's would have appeared an awkward squad. The master of such a force could not but be regarded by all his neighbours as a formidable enemy and a valuable ally.

But the mind of Frederic William was so ill regulated, that all his inclinations became passions, and all his passions partook of the character of moral and intellectual disease. His parsimony degenerated into sordid avarice. His taste for military pomp and order became a mania, like that of a Dutch burgomaster for tulips, or that of a member of the Roxburghe Club for Caxtons. While the envoys of the Court of Berlin

were in a state of such squalid poverty as moved the laughter of foreign capitals, while the food placed before the princes and princesses of the blood-royal of Prussia was too scanty to appease hunger, and so bad that even hunger loathed it, no price was thought too extravagant for tall recruits. The ambition of the King was to form a brigade of giants, and every country was ransacked by his agents for men above the ordinary stature. These researches were not confined to Europe. No head that towered above the crowd in the bazaars of Aleppo, of Cairo, or of Surat, could escape the crimps of Frederic William. One Irishman more than seven feet high, who was picked up in London by the Prussian ambassador, received a bounty of near thirteen hundred pounds sterling, very much more than the ambassador's salary. This extravagance was the more absurd, because a stout youth of five feet eight, who might have been procured for a few dollars, would in all probability have been a much more valuable soldier. But to Frederic William, this huge Irishman was what a brass Otho, or a Vinegar Bible, is to a collector of a different kind.

It is remarkable, that though the main end of Frederic William's administration was to have a great military force, though his reign forms an important epoch in the history of military discipline, and though his dominant passion was the love of military display, he was yet one of the most pacific of princes. We are afraid that his aversion to war was not the effect of humanity, but was merely one of his thousand whims. His feeling about his troops seems to have resembled a miser's feeling about his money. He loved to collect them, to count them, to see them increase; but he could not find it in his heart to break in upon the precious hoard. He looked forward to some future time when his Patagonian battalions were to drive hostile infantry before them like sheep; but this future time was always receding; and it is probable that, if his life had been prolonged thirty years, his superb army would never have seen any harder service than a sham fight in the fields near Berlin. But the great military means which he had collected were destined to be employed by a spirit far more daring and inventive than his own.

Frederic, surnamed the Great, son of Frederic William, was born in January 1712. It may safely be pronounced that he had received from nature a strong and sharp understanding, and a rare firmness of temper and intensity of will. As to the other parts of his character, it is difficult to say whether they are to be ascribed to nature, or to the strange training which he underwent. The history of his boyhood is painfully interesting. Oliver Twist in the parish workhouse, Smeke at Dotheboys Hall, were petted children when compared with this heir apparent of a crown. The nature of Frederic William was hard and bad, and the habit of exercising arbitrary power had made him frightfully savage. His rage constantly vented itself to right and left in curses and blows. When his

Majesty took a walk, every human being fled before him, as if a tiger had broken loose from a menagerie. If he met a lady in the street, he gave her a kick, and told her to go home and mind her brats. If he saw a clergyman staring at the soldiers, he admonished the reverend gentleman to betake himself to study and prayer, and enforced this pious advice by a sound caning, administered on the spot. But it was in his own house that he was most unreasonable and ferocious. His palace was hell, and he the most execrable of fiends, a cross between Moloch and Puck. His son Frederic and his daughter Wilhelmina, afterwards Margravine of Bayreuth, were in an especial manner objects of his aversion. His own mind was uncultivated. He despised literature. He hated infidels, papists, and metaphysicians, and did not well understand in what they differed from each other. The business of life, according to him, was to drill and to be drilled. The recreations suited to a prince, were to sit in a cloud of tobacco smoke, to sip Swedish beer between the puffs of the pipe, to play backgammon for three halfpence a rubber, to kill wild hogs, and to shoot partridges by the thousand. The Prince Royal showed little inclination either for the serious employments or for the amusements of his father. He shirked the duties of the parade; he detested the fume of tobacco; he had no taste either for backgammon or for field sports. He had an exquisite ear, and performed skillfully on the flute. His earliest instructors had been French refugees, and they had awakened in him a strong passion for French literature and French society. Frederic William regarded these tastes as effeminate and contemptible, and, by abuse and persecution, made them still stronger. Things became worse when the Prince Royal attained that time of life at which the great revolution in the human mind and body takes place. He was guilty of some youthful indiscretions, which no good and wise parent would regard with severity. At a later period he was accused, truly or falsely, of vices from which History averts her eyes, and which even Satire blushes to name, vices such that, to borrow the energetic language of Lord Keeper Coventry, "the depraved nature of man, which of itself carrieth man to all other sin, abhorreth them." But the offences of his youth were not characterized by any peculiar turpitude. They excited, however, transports of rage in the King, who hated all faults except those to which he was himself inclined, and who conceived that he made ample atonement to Heaven for his brutality, by holding the softer passions in detestation. The Prince Royal, too, was not one of those who are content to take their religion on trust. He asked puzzling questions, and brought forward arguments which seemed to savour of something different from pure Lutheranism. The King suspected that his son was inclined to be a heretic of some sort or other, whether Calvinist or Atheist his Majesty did not very well know. The ordinary malignity of Frederic William was bad enough. He now thought malignity a part of his duty as a Christian man, and all

the conscience that he had stimulated his hatred. The flute was broken: the French books were sent out of the palace: the Prince was kicked and cudgelled, and pulled by the hair. At dinner the plates were hurled at his head: sometimes he was restricted to bread and water: sometimes he was forced to swallow food so nauseous that he could not keep it on his stomach. Once his father knocked him down, dragged him along the floor to a window, and was with difficulty prevented from strangling him with the cord of the curtain. The Queen, for the crime of not wishing to see her son murdered, was subjected to the grossest indignities. The Princess Wilhelmina, who took her brother's part, was treated almost as ill as Mrs. Brownrigg's apprentices. Driven to despair, the unhappy youth tried to run away. Then the fury of the old tyrant rose to madness. The Prince was an officer in the army; his flight was therefore desertion; and, in the moral code of Frederic William, desertion was the highest of all crimes. "Desertion," says this royal theologian, in one of his half-crazy letters, "is from hell. It is a work of the children of the Devil. No child of God could possibly be guilty of it." An accomplice of the Prince, in spite of the recommendation of a court martial, was mercilessly put to death. It seemed probable that the Prince himself would suffer the same fate. It was with difficulty that the intercession of the States of Holland, of the Kings of Sweden and Poland, and of the Emperor of Germany, saved the House of Brandenburg from the stain of an unnatural murder. After months of cruel suspense, Frederic learned that his life would be spared. He remained, however, long a prisoner; but he was not on that account to be pitied. He found in his gaolers a tenderness which he had never found in his father; his table was not sumptuous, but he had wholesome food in sufficient quantity to appease hunger: he could read the *Henriade* without being kicked, and could play on his flute without having it broken over his head.

When his confinement terminated he was a man. He had nearly completed his twenty-first year, and could scarcely be kept much longer under the restraints which had made his boyhood miserable. Suffering had matured his understanding, while it had hardened his heart and soured his temper. He had learnt self-command and dissimulation; he affected to conform to some of his father's views, and submissively accepted a wife, who was a wife only in name, from his father's hand. He also served with credit, though without any opportunity of acquiring brilliant distinction, under the command of Prince Eugene, during a campaign marked by no extraordinary events. He was now permitted to keep a separate establishment, and was therefore able to indulge with caution his own tastes. Partly in order to conciliate the King, and partly, no doubt, from inclination, he gave up a portion of his time to military and political business, and thus gradually acquired such an aptitude for affairs as his most intimate associates were not aware that he possessed.

His favourite abode was at Rheinsberg, near the frontier which separates the Prussian dominions from the Duchy of Mecklenburg. Rheinsberg is a fertile and smiling spot, in the midst of the sandy waste of the Marquisate. The mansion, surrounded by woods of oak and beech, looks out upon a spacious lake. There Frederic amused himself by laying out gardens in regular alleys and intricate mazes, by building obelisks, temples, and conservatories, and by collecting rare fruits and flowers. His retirement was enlivened by a few companions, among whom he seems to have preferred those who, by birth or extraction, were French. With these intimates he dined and supped well, drank freely, and amused himself sometimes with concerts, and sometimes with holding chapters of a fraternity which he called the Order of Bayard; but literature was his chief resource.

His education had been entirely French. The long ascendancy which Lewis the Fourteenth had enjoyed, and the eminent merit of the tragic and comic dramatists, of the satirists, and of the preachers who had flourished under that magnificent prince, had made the French language predominant in Europe. Even in countries which had a national literature, and which could boast of names greater than those of Racine, of Molière, and of Massillon, in the country of Dante, in the country of Cervantes, in the country of Shakespere and Milton, the intellectual fashions of Paris had been to a great extent adopted. Germany had not yet produced a single masterpiece of poetry or eloquence. In Germany, therefore, the French taste reigned without rival and without limit. Every youth of rank was taught to speak and write French. That he should speak and write his own tongue with politeness, or even with accuracy and facility, was regarded as comparatively an unimportant object. Even Frederic William, with all his rugged Saxon prejudices, thought it necessary that his children should know French, and quite unnecessary that they should be well versed in German. The Latin was positively interdicted. "My son," his Majesty wrote, "shall not learn Latin; and, more than that, I will not suffer anybody even to mention such a thing to me." One of the preceptors ventured to read the *Golden Bull* in the original with the Prince Royal. Frederic William entered the room, and broke out in his usual kingly style.

"Rascal, what are you at there?"

"Please your Majesty," answered the preceptor, "I was explaining the *Golden Bull* to his Royal Highness."

"I'll Golden Bull you, you rascal!" roared the Majesty of Prussia. Up went the King's cane; away ran the terrified instructor; and Frederic's classical studies ended for ever. He now and then affected to quote Latin sentences, and produced such exquisitely Ciceronian phrases as these: — "Stante pede morire," — "De gustibus non est disputandus," — "Tot verbas tot spondera." Of Italian, he had not enough to read a page of Metastasio with ease; and of the Spanish and English, he did not, as far as we are aware, understand a single word.

As the highest human compositions to which he had access were those of the French writers, it is not strange that his admiration for those writers should have been unbounded. His ambitious and eager temper early prompted him to imitate what he admired. The wish, perhaps, dearest to his heart was, that he might rank among the masters of French rhetoric and poetry. He wrote prose and verse as indefatigably as if he had been a starving hack of Cave or Osborn; but Nature, which had bestowed on him, in a large measure, the talents of a captain and of an administrator, had withheld from him those higher and rarer gifts, without which industry labours in vain to produce immortal eloquence and song. And, indeed, had he been blessed with more imagination, wit, and fertility of thought, than he appears to have had, he would still have been subject to one great disadvantage, which would, in all probability, have forever prevented him from taking a high place among men of letters. He had not the full command of any language. There was no machine of thought which he could employ with perfect ease, confidence, and freedom. He had German enough to scold his servants, or to give the word of command to his grenadiers; but his grammar and pronunciation were extremely bad. He found it difficult to make out the meaning even of the simplest German poetry. On one occasion a version of Racine's *Iphigénie* was read to him. He held the French original in his hand; but was forced to own that, even with such help, he could not understand the translation. Yet, though he had neglected his mother tongue in order to bestow all his attention on French, his French was, after all, the French of a foreigner. It was necessary for him to have always at his beck some men of letters from Paris to point out the solecisms and false rhymes of which, to the last, he was frequently guilty. Even had he possessed the poetic faculty, of which, as far as we can judge, he was utterly destitute, the want of a language would have prevented him from being a great poet. No noble work of imagination, as far as we recollect, was ever composed by any man, except in a dialect which he had learned without remembering how or when, and which he had spoken with perfect ease before he had ever analysed its structure. Romans of great abilities wrote Greek verses; but how many of those verses have deserved to live? Many men of eminent genius have, in modern times, written Latin poems; but, as far as we are aware, none of those poems, not even Milton's, can be ranked in the first class of art, or even very high in the second. It is not strange, therefore, that, in the French verses of Frederic, we can find nothing beyond the reach of any man of good parts and industry, nothing above the level of Newdigate and Seatonian poetry. His best pieces may perhaps rank with the worst in Dodsley's collection. In history, he succeeded better. We do not, indeed, find, in any of his voluminous *Memoirs*, either deep reflection or vivid painting. But the narrative is distinguished by clearness, conciseness, good sense, and a certain air of truth and simplicity, which is singularly graceful in a man who, having done great things,

sits down to relate them. On the whole, however, none of his writings are so agreeable to us as his *Letters*, particularly those which are written with earnestness, and are not embroidered with verses.

It is not strange that a young man devoted to literature, and acquainted only with the literature of France, should have looked with profound veneration on the genius of Voltaire. "A man who has never seen the sun," says Calderon, in one of his charming comedies, "cannot be blamed for thinking that no glory can exceed that of the moon. A man who has seen neither moon nor sun, cannot be blamed for talking of the unrivalled brightness of the morning star." Had Frederic been able to read Homer and Milton or even Virgil and Tasso, his admiration of the *Henriade* would prove that he was utterly destitute of the power of discerning what is excellent in art. Had he been familiar with Sophocles or Shakspeare, we should have expected him to appreciate *Zaire* most justly. Had he been able to study Thucydides and Tacitus in the original Greek and Latin, he would have known that there were heights in the eloquence of history far beyond the reach of the author of the *Life of Charles the Twelfth*. But the finest heroic poem, several of the most powerful tragedies, and the most brilliant and picturesque historical work that Frederic had ever read, were Voltaire's. Such high and various excellence moved the young Prince almost to adoration. The opinions of Voltaire on religious and philosophical questions had not yet been fully exhibited to the public. At a later period, when an exile from his country, and at open war with the Church, he spoke out. But when Frederic was at Rheinsberg, Voltaire was still a courtier; and, though he could not always curb his petulant wit, he had as yet published nothing that could exclude him from Versailles, and little that a divine of the mild and generous school of Grotius and Tillotson might not read with pleasure. In the *Henriade*, in *Zaire*, and in *Alzire*, Christian piety is exhibited in the most amiable form; and, some years after the period of which we are writing, a Pope condescended to accept the dedication of *Mahomet*. The real sentiments of the poet, however, might be clearly perceived by a keen eye through the decent disguise with which he veiled them, and could not escape the sagacity of Frederic, who held similar opinions, and had been accustomed to practise similar dissimulation.

The Prince wrote to his idol in the style of a worshipper; and Voltaire replied with exquisite grace and address. A correspondence followed, which may be studied with advantage by those who wish to become proficient in the ignoble art of flattery. No man ever paid compliments better than Voltaire. His sweetest confectionery had always a delicate, yet stimulating flavour, which was delightful to palates wearied by the coarse preparations of inferior artists. It was only from his hand that so much sugar could be swallowed without making the swallower sick. Copies of verses, writing-desks, trinkets of amber, were exchanged between

the friends. Frederic confided his writings to Voltaire; and Voltaire applauded, as if Frederic had been Racine and Bossuet in one. One of his Royal Highness's performances was a refutation of Machiavelli. Voltaire undertook to convey it to the press. It was entitled the *Anti-Machiavel*, and was an edifying homily against rapacity, perfidy, arbitrary government, unjust war, in short, against almost everything for which its author is now remembered among men.

The old King uttered now and then a ferocious growl at the diversions of Rheinsberg. But his health was broken; his end was approaching; and his vigour was impaired. He had only one pleasure left, that of seeing tall soldiers. He could always be propitiated by a present of a grenadier of six feet four or six feet five; and such presents were from time to time judiciously offered by his son.

Early in the year 1740, Frederic William met death with a firmness and dignity worthy of a better and wiser man; and Frederic, who had just completed his twenty-eighth year, became King of Prussia. His character was little understood. That he had good abilities, indeed, no person who had talked with him, could doubt. But the easy Epicurean life which he had led, his love of good cookery and good wine, of music, of conversation, of light literature, led many to regard him as a sensual and intellectual voluptuary. His habit of canting about moderation, peace, liberty, and the happiness which a good mind derives from the happiness of others, had imposed on some who should have known better. Those who thought best of him, expected a Telemachus after Fénelon's pattern. Others predicted the approach of a Medicean age, an age propitious to learning and art, and not unpropitious to pleasure. Nobody had the least suspicion that a tyrant of extraordinary military and political talents, of industry more extraordinary still, without fear, without faith, and without mercy, had ascended the throne.

The disappointment of Falstaff at his old boon-companion's coronation was not more bitter than that which awaited some of the inmates of Rheinsberg. They had long looked forward to the accession of their patron, as to the event from which their own prosperity and greatness was to date. They had at last reached the promised land, the land which they had figured to themselves as flowing with milk and honey; and they found it a desert. "No more of these fooleries," was the short, sharp admonition given by Frederic to one of them. It soon became plain that, in the most important points, the new sovereign bore a strong family likeness to his predecessor. There was indeed a wide difference between the father and the son as respected extent and vigour of intellect, speculative opinions, amusements, studies, outward demeanour. But the groundwork of the character was the same in both. To both were common the love of order, the love of business, the military taste, the parsimony, the imperious spirit, the temper irritable even to ferocity, the pleasure in the pain and humiliation

of others. But these propensities had in Frederic William partaken of the general unsoundness of his mind, and wore a very different aspect when found in company with the strong and cultivated understanding of his successor. Thus, for example, Frederic was as anxious as any prince could be about the efficiency of his army. But this anxiety never degenerated into a monomania, like that which led his father to pay fancy prices for giants. Frederic was as thrifty about money as any prince or any private man ought to be. But he did not conceive, like his father, that it was worth while to eat unwholesome cabbages for the purpose of saving four or five rixdollars in the year. Frederic was, we fear, as malevolent as his father; but Frederic's wit enabled him often to show his malevolence in ways more decent than those to which his father resorted, and to inflict misery and degradation by a taunt instead of a blow. Frederic, it is true, by no means relinquished his hereditary privilege of kicking and cudgelling. His practice, however, as to that matter, differed in some important respects from his father's. To Frederic William, the mere circumstance that any persons whatever, men, women, or children, Prussians or foreigners, were within reach of his toes and of his cane, appeared to be a sufficient reason for proceeding to belabour them. Frederic required provocation as well as vicinity; nor was he ever known to inflict this paternal species of correction on any but his born subjects; though on one occasion M. Thiébault had reason, during a few seconds, to anticipate the high honour of being an exception to this general rule.

The character of Frederic was still very imperfectly understood either by his subjects or by his neighbours, when events occurred which exhibited it in a strong light. A few months after his accession Charles the Sixth, Emperor of Germany, died, the last descendant, in the male line, of the House of Austria.

Charles had no son, and had, long before his death, relinquished all hopes of male issue. During the latter part of his life, his principal object had been to secure to his descendants in the female line the many crowns of the House of Hapsburg. With this view, he had promulgated a new law of succession, widely celebrated throughout Europe under the name of the Pragmatic Sanction. By virtue of this law, his daughter, the Archduchess Maria Theresa, wife of Francis of Lorraine, succeeded to the dominions of her ancestors.

No sovereign has ever taken possession of a throne by a clearer title. All the politics of the Austrian cabinet had, during twenty years, been directed to one single end, the settlement of the succession. From every person whose rights could be considered as injuriously affected, renunciations in the most solemn form had been obtained. The new law had been ratified by the Estates of all the kingdoms and principalities which made up the great Austrian monarchy. England, France, Spain, Russia, Poland, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, the Germanic body, had bound them-

selves by treaty to maintain the Pragmatic Sanction. That instrument was placed under the protection of the public faith of the whole civilized world.

Even if no positive stipulations on this subject had existed, the arrangement was one which no good man would have been willing to disturb. It was a peaceable arrangement. It was an arrangement acceptable to the great population whose happiness was chiefly concerned. It was an arrangement which made no change in the distribution of power among the states of Christendom. It was an arrangement which could be set aside only by means of a general war; and, if it were set aside, the effect would be, that the equilibrium of Europe would be deranged, that the loyal and patriotic feelings of millions would be cruelly outraged, and that great provinces which had been united for centuries would be torn from each other by main force.

The sovereigns of Europe were, therefore, bound by every obligation which those who are entrusted with power over their fellow-creatures ought to hold most sacred, to respect and defend the rights of the Archduchess. Her situation and her personal qualities were such as might be expected to move the mind of any generous man to pity, admiration, and chivalrous tenderness. She was in her twenty-fourth year. Her form was majestic, her features beautiful, her countenance sweet and animated, her voice musical, her deportment gracious and dignified. In all domestic relations she was without reproach. She was married to a husband whom she loved, and was on the point of giving birth to a child, when death deprived her of her father. The loss of a parent, and the new cares of empire, were too much for her in the delicate state of her health. Her spirits were depressed, and her cheek lost its bloom. Yet it seemed that she had little cause for anxiety. It seemed that justice, humanity, and the faith of treaties would have their due weight, and that the settlement so solemnly guaranteed would be quietly carried into effect. England, Russia, Poland, and Holland, declared in form their intention to adhere to their engagements. The French ministers made a verbal declaration to the same effect. But from no quarter did the young Queen of Hungary receive stronger assurances of friendship and support than from the King of Prussia.

Yet the King of Prussia, the Anti-Machiavel, had already fully determined to commit the great crime of violating his plighted faith, of robbing the ally whom he was bound to defend, and of plunging all Europe into a long, bloody, and desolating war; and all this for no end whatever, except that he might extend his dominions, and see his name in the gazettes. He determined to assemble a great army with speed and secrecy, to invade Silesia before Maria Theresa should be apprised of his design, and to add that rich province to his kingdom.

We will not condescend to refute at length the pleas which the compiler of the *Memoirs* before us has copied from Doctor Preuss. They

amount to this, that the House of Brandenburg had some ancient pretensions to Silesia, and had in the previous century been compelled, by hard usage on the part of the Court of Vienna, to waive those pretensions. It is certain that, whoever might originally have been in the right, Prussia had submitted. Prince after prince of the House of Brandenburg had acquiesced in the existing arrangement. Nay, the Court of Berlin had recently been allied with that of Vienna, and had guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian states. Is it not perfectly clear that, if antiquated claims are to be set up against recent treaties and long possession, the world can never be at peace for a day? The laws of all nations have wisely established a time of limitation, after which titles, however illegitimate in their origin, cannot be questioned. It is felt by everybody, that to eject a person from his estate on the ground of some injustice committed in the time of the Tudors would produce all the evils which result from arbitrary confiscation, and would make all property insecure. It concerns the commonwealth—so runs the legal maxim—that there be an end of litigation. And surely this maxim is at least equally applicable to the great commonwealth of states; for in that commonwealth litigation means the devastation of provinces, the suspension of trade and industry, sieges like those of Badajoz and St. Sebastian, pitched fields like those of Eylau and Borodino. We hold that the transfer of Norway from Denmark to Sweden was an unjustifiable proceeding; but would the King of Denmark be therefore justified in landing, without any new provocation in Norway, and commencing military operations there? The King of Holland thinks, no doubt, that he was unjustly deprived of the Belgian provinces. Grant that it were so. Would he, therefore, be justified in marching with an army on Brussels? The case against Frederic was still stronger, inasmuch as the injustice of which he complained had been committed more than a century before. Nor must it be forgotten that he owed the highest personal obligations to the House of Austria. It may be doubted whether his life had not been preserved by the intercession of the prince whose daughter he was about to plunder.

To do the King justice, he pretended to no more virtue than he had. In manifestoes he might, for form's sake, insert some idle stories about his antiquated claim on Silesia; but in his conversations and *Memoirs* he took a very different tone. His own words are: "Ambition, interest, the desire of making people talk about me, carried the day; and I decided for war."

Having resolved on his course, he acted with ability and vigour. It was impossible wholly to conceal his preparations; for throughout the Prussian territories regiments, guns, and baggage were in motion. The Austrian envoy at Berlin apprised his court of these facts, and expressed a suspicion of Frederic's designs; but the ministers of Maria Theresa refused to give credit to so black an imputation on a young prince who was known

chiefly by his high professions of integrity and philanthropy. "We will not," they wrote, "we cannot, believe it."

In the meantime the Prussian forces had been assembled. Without any declaration of war, without any demand for reparation, in the very act of pouring forth compliments and assurances of goodwill, Frederic commenced hostilities. Many thousands of his troops were actually in Silesia before the Queen of Hungary knew that he had set up any claim to any part of her territories. At length he sent her a message which could be regarded only as an insult. If she would but let him have Silesia, he would, he said, stand by her against any power which should try to deprive her of her other dominions; as if he was not already bound to stand by her, or as if his new promise could be of more value than the old one.

It was the depth of winter. The cold was severe, and the roads heavy with mire. But the Prussians pressed on. Resistance was impossible. The Austrian army was then neither numerous nor efficient. The small portion of that army which lay in Silesia was unprepared for hostilities. Glogau was blockaded; Breslau opened its gates; Ohlau was evacuated. A few scattered garrisons still held out; but the whole open country was subjugated: no enemy ventured to encounter the King in the field; and, before the end of January 1741, he returned to receive the congratulations of his subjects at Berlin.

Had the Silesian question been merely a question between Frederic and Maria Theresa, it would be impossible to acquit the Prussian King of gross perfidy. But when we consider the effects which his policy produced, and could not fail to produce, on the whole community of civilized nations, we are compelled to pronounce a condemnation still more severe. Till he began the war, it seemed possible, even probable, that the peace of the world would be preserved. The plunder of the great Austrian heritage was indeed a strong temptation; and in more than one cabinet ambitious schemes were already meditated. But the treaties by which the Pragmatic Sanction had been guaranteed were express and recent. To throw all Europe into confusion for a purpose clearly unjust, was no light matter. England was true to her engagements. The voice of Fleury had always been for peace. He had a conscience. He was now in extreme old age, and was unwilling, after a life which, when his situation was considered, must be pronounced singularly pure, to carry the fresh stain of a great crime before the tribunal of his God. Even the vain and unprincipled Belle-Isle, whose whole life was one wild day-dream of conquest and spoliation, felt that France, bound as she was by solemn stipulations, could not, without disgrace, make a direct attack on the Austrian dominions. Charles, Elector of Bavaria, pretended that he had a right to a large part of the inheritance which the Pragmatic Sanction gave to the Queen of Hungary; but he was not sufficiently powerful to move without support. It might, therefore, not unreasonably be expected that, after a short period of restlessness,

all the potentates of Christendom would acquiesce in the arrangements made by the late Emperor. But the selfish rapacity of the King of Prussia gave the signal to his neighbours. His example quieted their sense of shame. His success led them to underrate the difficulty of dismembering the Austrian monarchy. The whole world sprang to arms. On the head of Frederic is all the blood which was shed in the war which raged during many years and in every quarter of the globe, the blood of the column of Fontenoy, the blood of the mountaineers who were slaughtered at Culloden. The evils produced by his wickedness were felt in lands where the name of Prussia was unknown; and, in order that he might rob a neighbour whom he had promised to defend, black men fought on the coast of Coromandel, and the red men scalped each other by the Great Lakes of North America.

Silesia had been occupied without a battle; but the Austrian troops were advancing to the relief of the fortresses which still held out. In the spring Frederic rejoined his army. He had seen little of war, and had never commanded any great body of men in the field. It is not, therefore, strange that his first military operations showed little of that skill which, at a later period, was the admiration of Europe. What connoisseurs say of some pictures painted by Raphael in his youth, may be said of this campaign. It was in Frederic's early bad manner. Fortunately for him, the generals to whom he was opposed were men of small capacity. The discipline of his own troops, particularly of the infantry, was unequalled in that age; and some able and experienced officers were at hand to assist him with their advice. Of these, the most distinguished was Field-Marshal Schwerin, a brave adventurer of Pomeranian extraction, who had served half the governments of Europe, had borne the commissions of the States-General of Holland and of the Duke of Mecklenburg, had fought under Marlborough at Blenheim, and had been with Charles the Twelfth at Bender.

Frederic's first battle was fought at Molwitz; and never did the career of a great commander open in a more inauspicious manner. His army was victorious. Not only, however, did he not establish his title to the character of an able general; but he was so unfortunate as to make it doubtful whether he possessed the vulgar courage of a soldier. The cavalry, which he commanded in person, was put to flight. Unaccustomed to the tumult and carnage of a field of battle, he lost his self-possession, and listened too readily to those who urged him to save himself. His English grey carried him many miles from the field, while Schwerin, though wounded in two places, manfully upheld the day. The skill of the old Field-Marshal and the steadiness of the Prussian battalions prevailed; and the Austrian army was driven from the field with the loss of eight thousand men.

The news was carried late at night to a mill in which the King had taken shelter. It gave him a bitter pang. He was successful; but he owed his success to dispositions which others had made, and to the valour of men

who had fought while he was flying. So unpromising was the first appearance of the greatest warrior of that age.

The battle of Molwitz was the signal for a general explosion throughout Europe. Bavaria took up arms. France, not yet declaring herself a principal in the war, took part in it as an ally of Bavaria. The two great statesmen to whom mankind had owed many years of tranquillity, disappeared about this time from the scene, but not till they had both been guilty of the weakness of sacrificing their sense of justice and their love of peace to the vain hope of preserving their power. Fleury, sinking under age and infirmity, was borne down by the impetuosity of Belle-Isle. Walpole retired from the service of his ungrateful country to his woods and paintings at Houghton; and his power devolved on the daring and eccentric Carteret. As were the ministers, so were the nations. Thirty years during which Europe had, with few interruptions, enjoyed repose, had prepared the public mind for great military efforts. A new generation had grown up, which could not remember the siege of Turin or the slaughter of Malplaquet; which knew war by nothing but its trophies; and which, while it looked with pride on the tapestries at Blenheim, or the statue in the Place of Victories, little thought by what privations, by what waste of private fortunes, by how many bitter tears, conquests must be purchased.

For a time fortune seemed adverse to the Queen of Hungary. Frederic invaded Moravia. The French and Bavarians penetrated into Bohemia, and were there joined by the Saxons. Prague was taken. The Elector of Bavaria was raised by the suffrages of his colleagues to the Imperial throne, a throne which the practice of centuries had almost entitled the House of Austria to regard as a hereditary possession.

Yet was the spirit of the haughty daughter of the Cæsars unbroken. Hungary was still hers by an unquestionable title; and although her ancestors had found Hungary the most mutinous of all their kingdoms, she resolved to trust herself to the fidelity of a people, rude indeed, turbulent, and impatient of oppression, but brave, generous, and simple-hearted. In the midst of distress and peril she had given birth to a son, afterwards the Emperor Joseph the Second. Scarcely had she arisen from her couch, when she hastened to Presburg. There, in the sight of an innumerable multitude, she was crowned with the crown and robed with the robe of St. Stephen. No spectator could restrain his tears when the beautiful young mother, still weak from child-bearing, rode, after the fashion of her fathers, up the Mount of Defiance, unsheathed the ancient sword of state, shook it towards north and south, east and west, and, with a glow on her pale face, challenged the four corners of the world to dispute her rights and those of her boy. At the first sitting of the Diet she appeared clad in deep mourning for her father, and in pathetic and dignified words implored her people to support her just cause. Magnates and deputies sprang up, half drew their sabres, and with eager voices vowed to stand

by her with their lives and fortunes. Till then, her firmness had never once forsaken her before the public eye; but at that shout she sank down upon her throne, and wept aloud. Still more touching was the sight when, a few days later, she came again before the Estates of her realm, and held up before them the little Archduke in her arms. Then it was that the enthusiasm of Hungary broke forth into that war-cry which soon resounded throughout Europe, "Let us die for our King, Maria Theresa!"

In the meantime, Frederic was meditating a change of policy. He had no wish to raise France to supreme power on the Continent, at the expense of the House of Hapsburg. His first object was to rob the Queen of Hungary. His second object was that, if possible, nobody should rob her but himself. He had entered into engagements with the powers leagued against Austria; but these engagements were in his estimation of no more force than the guarantee formerly given to the Pragmatic Sanction. His plan now was to secure his share of the plunder by betraying his accomplices. Maria Theresa was little inclined to listen to any such compromise; but the English Government represented to her so strongly the necessity of buying off Frederic, that she agreed to negotiate. The negotiation would not, however, have ended in a treaty, had not the arms of Frederic been crowned with a second victory. Prince Charles of Lorraine, brother-in-law to Maria Theresa, a bold and active, though unfortunate general, gave battle to the Prussians at Chotusitz, and was defeated. The King was still only a learner of the military art. He acknowledged, at a later period, that his success on this occasion was to be attributed, not at all to his own generalship, but solely to the valour and steadiness of his troops. He completely effaced, however, by his personal courage and energy, the stain which Molwitz had left on his reputation.

A peace, concluded under the English mediation, was the fruit of this battle. Maria Theresa ceded Silesia: Frederic abandoned his allies: Saxony followed his example; and the Queen was left at liberty to turn her whole force against France and Bavaria. She was everywhere triumphant. The French were compelled to evacuate Bohemia, and with difficulty effected their escape. The whole line of their retreat might be tracked by the corpses of thousands who had died of cold, fatigue, and hunger. Many of those who reached their country carried with them the seeds of death. Bavaria was overrun by bands of ferocious warriors from that bloody debatable land which lies on the frontier between Christendom and Islam. The terrible names of the Pandoor, the Croat, and the Hussar, then first became familiar to Western Europe. The unfortunate Charles of Bavaria, vanquished by Austria, betrayed by Prussia, driven from his hereditary states, and neglected by his allies, was hurried by shame and remorse to an untimely end. An English army appeared in the heart of Germany, and defeated the French at Dettingen. The Austrian captains already began

to talk of completing the work of Marlborough and Eugene, and of compelling France to relinquish Alsace and the three Bishoprics.

The Court of Versailles, in this peril, looked to Frederic for help. He had been guilty of two great treasons: perhaps he might be induced to commit a third. The Duchess of Chateauroux then held the chief influence over the feeble Lewis. She determined to send an agent to Berlin; and Voltaire was selected for the mission. He eagerly undertook the task; for, while his literary fame filled all Europe, he was troubled with a childish craving for political distinction. He was vain, and not without reason, of his address, and of his insinuating eloquence; and he flattered himself that he possessed boundless influence over the King of Prussia. The truth was that he knew, as yet, only one corner of Frederic's character. He was well acquainted with all the petty vanities and affectations of the poetaster; but was not aware that these foibles were united with all the talents and vices which lead to success in active life, and that the unlucky versifier who pestered him with reams of middling Alexandrines, was the most vigilant, suspicious, and severe of politicians.

Voltaire was received with every mark of respect and friendship, was lodged in the palace, and had a seat daily at the royal table. The negotiation was of an extraordinary description. Nothing can be conceived more whimsical than the conferences which took place between the first literary man and the first practical man of the age, whom a strange weakness had induced to exchange their parts. The great poet would talk of nothing but treaties and guarantees, and the great King of nothing but metaphors and rhymes. On one occasion Voltaire put into his Majesty's hands a paper on the state of Europe, and received it back with verses scrawled on the margin. In secret they both laughed at each other. Voltaire did not spare the King's poems; and the King has left on record his opinion of Voltaire's diplomacy. "He had no credentials," says Frederic, "and the whole mission was a joke, a mere farce."

But what the influence of Voltaire could not effect, the rapid progress of Austrian arms effected. If it should be in the power of Maria Theresa and George the Second to dictate terms of peace to France, what chance was there that Prussia would long retain Silesia? Frederic's conscience told him that he had acted perfidiously and inhumanly towards the Queen of Hungary. That her resentment was strong she had given ample proof; and of her respect for treaties he judged by his own. Guarantees, he said, were mere filigree, pretty to look at, but too brittle to bear the slightest pressure. He thought it his safest course to ally himself closely to France, and again to attack the Empress Queen. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1744, without notice, without any decent pretext, he recommenced hostilities, marched through the electorate of Saxony without troubling himself about the permission of the Elector, invaded Bohemia, took Prague, and even menaced Vienna.

It was now that, for the first time, he experienced the inconstancy of fortune. An Austrian army under Charles of Lorraine threatened his communications with Silesia. Saxony was all in arms behind him. He found it necessary to save himself by a retreat. He afterwards owned that his failure was the natural effect of his own blunders. No general, he said, had ever committed greater faults. It must be added, that to the reverses of this campaign he always ascribed his subsequent successes. It was in the midst of difficulty and disgrace that he caught the first clear glimpses of the principles of the military art.

The memorable year of 1745 followed. The war raged by sea and land, in Italy, in Germany, and in Flanders; and even England, after many years of profound internal quiet, saw, for the last time, hostile armies set in battle array against each other. This year is memorable in the life of Frederic, as the date at which his novitiate in the art of war may be said to have terminated. There have been great captains whose precocious and self-taught military skill resembled intuition. Condé, Clive, and Napoleon are examples. But Frederic was not one of these brilliant portents. His proficiency in military science was simply the proficiency which a man of vigorous faculties makes in any science to which he applies his mind with earnestness and industry. It was at Hohenfriedberg that he first proved how much he had profited by his errors, and by their consequences. His victory on that day was chiefly due to his skilful dispositions, and convinced Europe that the prince who, a few years before, had stood aghast in the rout of Molwitz, had attained in the military art a mastery equalled by none of his contemporaries, or equalled by Saxe alone. The victory of Hohenfriedberg was speedily followed by that of Sorr.

In the meantime, the arms of France had been victorious in the Low Countries. Frederic had no longer reason to fear that Maria Theresa would be able to give law to Europe, and he began to meditate a fourth breach of his engagements. The Court of Versailles was alarmed and mortified. A letter of earnest expostulation, in the handwriting of Lewis, was sent to Berlin; but in vain. In the autumn of 1745, Frederic made peace with England, and, before the close of the year, with Austria also. The pretensions of Charles of Bavaria could present no obstacle to an accommodation. That unhappy prince was no more; and Francis of Lorraine, the husband of Maria Theresa, was raised, with the general assent of the Germanic body, to the Imperial throne.

Prussia was again at peace; but the European war lasted till, in the year 1748, it was terminated by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Of all the powers that had taken part in it, the only gainer was Frederic. Not only had he added to his patrimony the fine province of Silesia: he had, by his unprincipled dexterity, succeeded so well in alternately depressing the scale of Austria and that of France, that he was generally regarded as

holding the balance of Europe, a high dignity for one who ranked lowest among kings, and whose great-grandfather had been no more than a Margrave. By the public, the King of Prussia was considered as a politician destitute alike of morality and decency, insatiably rapacious, and shamelessly false; nor was the public much in the wrong. He was at the same time allowed to be a man of parts, a rising general, a shrewd negotiator and administrator. Those qualities wherein he surpassed all mankind, were as yet unknown to others or to himself; for they were qualities which shine out only on a dark ground. His career had hitherto, with little interruption, been prosperous; and it was only in adversity, in adversity which seemed without hope or resource, in adversity which would have overwhelmed even men celebrated for strength of mind, that his real greatness could be shown.

He had, from the commencement of his reign, applied himself to public business after a fashion unknown among kings. Lewis the Fourteenth, indeed, had been his own prime minister, and had exercised a general superintendence over all the departments of the Government; but this was not sufficient for Frederic. He was not content with being his own prime minister: he would be his own sole minister. Under him there was no room, not merely for a Richelieu or a Mazarin, but for a Colbert, a Louvois, or a Torcy. A love of labour for its own sake, a restless and insatiable longing to dictate, to intermeddle, to make his power felt, a profound scorn and distrust of his fellow-creatures, made him unwilling to ask counsel, to confide important secrets, to delegate ample powers. The highest functionaries under his government were mere clerks, and were not so much trusted by him as valuable clerks are often trusted by the heads of departments. He was his own treasurer, his own commander-in-chief, his own intendant of public works, his own minister for trade and justice, for home affairs and foreign affairs, his own master of the horse, steward, and chamberlain. Matters of which no chief of an office in any other government would ever hear, were, in this singular monarchy, decided by the King in person. If a traveller wished for a good place to see a review, he had to write to Frederic, and received next day, from a royal messenger, Frederic's answer signed by Frederic's own hand. This was an extravagant, a morbid activity. The public business would assuredly have been better done if each department had been put under a man of talents and integrity, and if the King had contented himself with a general control. In this manner the advantages which belong to unity of design, and the advantages which belong to the division of labour, would have been to a great extent combined. But such a system would not have suited the peculiar temper of Frederic. He could tolerate no will, no reason, in the State, save his own. He wished for no abler assistance than that of penmen who had just understanding enough to translate and transcribe, to make out his scrawls, and to put his concise Yes and No into an

official form. Of the higher intellectual faculties, there is as much in a copying machine, or a lithographic press, as he required from a secretary of the cabinet.

His own exertions were such as were hardly to be expected from a human body or a human mind. At Potsdam, his ordinary residence, he rose at three in summer and four in winter. A page soon appeared, with a large basket full of all the letters which had arrived for the King by the last courier, despatches from ambassadors, reports from officers of revenue, plans of buildings, proposals for draining marshes, complaints from persons who thought themselves aggrieved, applications from persons who wanted titles, military commissions, and civil situations. He examined the seals with a keen eye; for he was never for a moment free from the suspicion that some fraud might be practised on him. Then he read the letters, divided them into several packets, and signified his pleasure, generally by a mark, often by two or three words, now and then by some cutting epigram. By eight he had generally finished this part of his task. The adjutant-general was then in attendance, and received instructions for the day as to all the military arrangements of the kingdom. Then the King went to review his guards, not as kings ordinarily review their guards, but with the minute attention and severity of an old drill-sergeant. In the meantime the four cabinet secretaries had been employed in answering the letters on which the King had that morning signified his will. These unhappy men were forced to work all the year round like negro slaves in the time of the sugar-crop. They never had a holiday. They never knew what it was to dine. It was necessary that, before they stirred, they should finish the whole of their work. The King, always on his guard against treachery, took from the heap a handful of letters at random, and looked into them to see whether his instructions had been exactly followed. This was no bad security against foul play on the part of the secretaries; for if one of them were detected in a trick, he might think himself fortunate if he escaped with five years of imprisonment in a dungeon. Frederic then signed the replies, and all were sent off the same evening.

The general principles on which this strange government was conducted deserve attention. The policy of Frederic was essentially the same as his father's; but Frederic, while he carried that policy to lengths to which his father never thought of carrying it, cleared it at the same time from the absurdities with which his father had encumbered it. The King's first object was to have a great, efficient, and well-trained army. He had a kingdom which in extent and population was hardly in the second rank of European powers; and yet he aspired to a place not inferior to that of the sovereigns of England, France, and Austria. For that end it was necessary that Prussia should be all sting. Lewis the Fifteenth, with five times as many subjects as Frederic, and more than five times as large a revenue, had not a more formidable army. The proportion which the sol-

diers in Prussia bore to the people seems hardly credible. Of the males in the vigour of life, a seventh part were probably under arms; and this great force had, by drilling, by reviewing, and by the unsparing use of cane and scourge, been taught to form all evolutions with a rapidity and a precision which would have astonished Villars or Eugene. The elevated feelings which are necessary to the best kind of army were then wanting to the Prussian service. In those ranks were not found the religious and political enthusiasm which inspired the pikemen of Cromwell, the patriotic ardour, the thirst of glory, the devotion to a great leader, which inflamed the Old Guard of Napoleon. But in all the mechanical parts of the military calling, the Prussians were as superior to the English and French troops of that day as the English and French troops to a rustic militia.

Though the pay of the Prussian soldier was small, though every rixdollar of extraordinary charge was scrutinized by Frederic with a vigilance and suspicion such as Mr. Joseph Hume never brought to the examination of an army estimate, the expense of such an establishment was, for the means of the country, enormous. In order that it might not be utterly ruinous, it was necessary that every other expense should be cut down to the lowest possible point. Accordingly Frederic, though his dominions bordered on the sea, had no navy. He neither had nor wished to have colonies. His judges, his fiscal officers, were meanly paid. His ministers at foreign courts walked on foot, or drove shabby old carriages till the axletrees gave way. Even to his highest diplomatic agents, who resided at London and Paris, he allowed less than a thousand pounds sterling a year. The royal household was managed with a frugality unusual in the establishments of opulent subjects, unexampled in any other palace. The King loved good eating and drinking, and during a great part of his life took pleasure in seeing his table surrounded by guests; yet the whole charge of his kitchen was brought within the sum of two thousand pounds sterling a year. He examined every extraordinary item with a care which might be thought to suit the mistress of a boarding-house better than a great prince. When more than four rixdollars were asked of him for a hundred oysters, he stormed as if he had heard that one of his generals had sold a fortress to the Empress Queen. Not a bottle of champagne was uncorked without his express order. The game of the royal parks and forests, a serious head of expenditure in most kingdoms, was to him a source of profit. The whole was farmed out; and though the farmers were almost ruined by their contract, the King would grant them no remission. His wardrobe consisted of one fine gala dress, which lasted him all his life; of two or three old coats fit for Monmouth Street, of yellow waistcoats soiled with snuff, and of huge boots embrowned by time. One taste alone sometimes allured him beyond the limits of parsimony, nay, even beyond the limits of prudence, the taste for building. In all other things

his economy was such as we might call by a harsher name, if we did not reflect that his funds were drawn from a heavily taxed people, and that it was impossible for him, without excessive tyranny, to keep up at once a formidable army and a splendid court.

Considered as an administrator, Frederic had undoubtedly many titles to praise. Order was strictly maintained throughout his dominions. Property was secure. A great liberty of speaking and of writing was allowed. Confident in the irresistible strength derived from a great army, the King looked down on malcontents and libellers with a wise disdain; and gave little encouragement to spies and informers. When he was told of the disaffection of one of his subjects, he merely asked, "How many thousand men can he bring into the field?" He once saw a crowd staring at something on a wall. He rode up and found that the object of curiosity was a scurrilous placard against himself. The placard had been posted up so high that it was not easy to read it. Frederic ordered his attendants to take it down and put it lower. "My people and I," he said, "have come to an agreement which satisfies us both. They are to say what they please, and I am to do what I please." No person would have dared to publish in London satires on George the Second approaching to the atrocity of those satires on Frederic, which the booksellers at Berlin sold with impunity. One bookseller sent to the palace a copy of the most stinging lampoon that perhaps was ever written in the world, the *Memoirs of Voltaire*, published by Beaumarchais, and asked for his Majesty's orders. "Do not advertise it in an offensive manner," said the King; "but sell it by all means. I hope it will pay you well." Even among statesmen accustomed to the licence of a free press, such steadfastness of mind as this is not very common.

It is due also to the memory of Frederic to say that he earnestly laboured to secure to his people the great blessing of cheap and speedy justice. He was one of the first rulers who abolished the cruel and absurd practice of torture. No sentence of death, pronounced by the ordinary tribunals, was executed without his sanction; and his sanction, except in cases of murder, was rarely given. Towards his troops he acted in a very different manner. Military offences were punished with such barbarous scourging that to be shot was considered by the Prussian soldier as a secondary punishment. Indeed, the principle which pervaded Frederic's whole policy was this, that the more severely the army is governed, the safer it is to treat the rest of the community with lenity.

Religious persecution was unknown under his government, unless some foolish and unjust restrictions which lay upon the Jews may be regarded as forming an exception. His policy with respect to the Catholics of Silesia presented an honourable contrast to the policy which, under very similar circumstances, England long followed with respect to the Catholics of Ireland. Every form of religion and irreligion found an asylum in the States. The scoffer whom the parliaments of France had sentenced to a cruel

death, was consoled by a commission in the Prussian service. The Jesuit who could show his face nowhere else, who in Britain was still subject to penal laws, who was proscribed by France, Spain, Portugal, and Naples, who had been given up even by the Vatican, found safety and the means of subsistence in the Prussian dominions.

Most of the vices of Frederic's administration resolve themselves into one vice, the spirit of meddling. The indefatigable activity of his intellect, his dictatorial temper, his military habits, all inclined him to this great fault. He drilled his people as he drilled his grenadiers. Capital and industry were diverted from their natural direction by a crowd of preposterous regulations. There was a monopoly of coffee, a monopoly of tobacco, a monopoly of refined sugar. The public money, of which the King was generally so sparing, was lavishly spent in ploughing bogs, in planting mulberry trees amidst the sand, in bringing sheep from Spain to improve the Saxon wool, in bestowing prizes for fine yarn, in building manufactories of porcelain, manufactories of carpets, manufactories of hardware, manufactories of lace. Neither the experience of other rulers, nor his own, could ever teach him something more than an edict and a grant of public money was required to create a Lyons, a Brussels, or a Birmingham.

For his commercial policy, however, there was some excuse. He had on his side illustrious examples and popular prejudice. Grievously as he erred, he erred in company with his age. In other departments his meddling was altogether without apology. He interfered with the course of justice as well as with the course of trade; and set up his own crude notions of equity against the law as expounded by the unanimous voice of the gravest magistrates. It never occurred to him that men whose lives were passed in adjudicating on questions of civil right were more likely to form correct opinions on such questions than a prince whose attention was divided among a thousand objects, and who had never read a law-book through. The resistance opposed to him by the tribunals inflamed him to fury. He reviled his Chancellor. He kicked the shins of his Judges. He did not, it is true, intend to act unjustly. He firmly believed that he was doing right, and defending the cause of the poor against the wealthy. Yet this well-meant meddling probably did far more harm than all the explosions of his evil passions during the whole of his long reign. We could make shift to live under a debauchee or a tyrant; but to be ruled by a busy-body is more than human nature can bear.

The same passion for directing and regulating appeared in every part of the King's policy. Every lad of a certain station in life was forced to go to certain schools within the Prussian dominions. If a young Prussian repaired, though but for a few weeks, to Leyden or Göttingen for the purpose of study, the offence was punished with civil disabilities, and sometimes with the confiscation of property. Nobody was to travel without the royal permission. If the permission were granted, the pocket-money of the

tourist was fixed by royal ordinance. A merchant might take with him two hundred and fifty rixdollars in gold, a noble was allowed to take four hundred; for it may be observed, in passing, that Frederic studiously kept up the old distinction between the nobles and the community. In speculation, he was a French philosopher, but in action, a German prince. He talked and wrote about the privileges of blood in the style of Sieyès; but in practice no chapter in the empire looked with a keener eye to genealogies and quarterings.

Such was Frederic the Ruler. But there was another Frederic, the Frederic of Rheinsberg, the fiddler and flute-player, the poetaster and the metaphysician. Amidst the cares of State the King had retained his passion for music, for reading, for writing, for literary society. To these amusements he devoted all the time that he could snatch from the business of war and government; and perhaps more light is thrown on his character by what passed during his hours of relaxation, than by his battles or his laws.

It was the just boast of Schiller that, in his country, no Augustus, no Lorenzo, had watched over the infancy of poetry. The rich and energetic language of Luther, driven by the Latin from the schools of pedants, and by the French from the palaces of kings, had taken refuge among the people. Of the powers of that language Frederic had no notion. He generally spoke of it, and of those who used it, with the contempt of ignorance. His library consisted of French books; at his table nothing was heard but French conversation. The associates of his hours of relaxation were, for the most part, foreigners. Britain furnished to the royal circle two distinguished men, born in the highest rank, and driven by civil dissensions from the land to which, under happier circumstances, their talents and virtues might have been a source of strength and glory. George Keith, Earl Marischal of Scotland, had taken arms for the House of Stuart in 1715; and his younger brother James, then only seventeen years old, had fought gallantly by his side. When all was lost they retired together to the Continent, roved from country to country, served under various standards, and so bore themselves as to win the respect and goodwill of many who had no love for the Jacobite cause. Their long wanderings terminated at Potsdam; nor had Frederic any associates who deserved or obtained so large a share of his esteem. They were not only accomplished men, but nobles and warriors, capable of serving him in war and diplomacy, as well as of amusing him at supper. Alone of all his companions they appear never to have had reason to complain of his demeanour towards them. Some of those who knew the palace best pronounced that the Lord Marischal was the only human being whom Frederic ever really loved.

Italy sent to the parties at Potsdam the ingenious and amiable Algarotti, and Bastiani, the most crafty, cautious, and servile of Abbés. But the greater part of the society which Frederic had assembled round him was drawn from France. Maupertuis had acquired some celebrity by the journey

which he had made to Lapland, for the purpose of ascertaining, by actual measurement, the shape of our planet. He was placed in the chair of the Academy of Berlin, a humble imitation of the renowned academy of Paris. Baculard D'Arnaud, a young poet, who was thought to have given promise of great things, had been induced to quit his country, and to reside at the Prussian Court. The Marquess D'Argens was among the King's favourite companions, on account, as it should seem, of the strong opposition between their characters. The parts of D'Argens were good, and his manners those of a finished French gentleman; but his whole soul was dissolved in sloth, timidity, and self-indulgence. He was one of that abject class of minds which are superstitious without being religious. Hating Christianity with a rancour which made him incapable of rational inquiry, unable to see in the harmony and beauty of the universe the traces of divine power and wisdom, he was the slave of dreams and omens, would not sit down to table with thirteen in company, turned pale if the salt fell towards him, begged his guests not to cross their knives and forks on their plates, and would not for the world commence a journey on Friday. His health was a subject of constant anxiety to him. Whenever his head ached, or his pulse beat quick, his dastardly fears and effeminate precautions were the jest of all Berlin. All this suited the King's purpose admirably. He wanted somebody by whom he might be amused, and whom he might despise. When he wished to pass half an hour in easy polished conversation. D'Argens was an excellent companion; when he wanted to vent his spleen and contempt, D'Argens was an excellent butt.

With these associates, and others of the same class, Frederic loved to spend the time which he could steal from public cares. He wished his supper parties to be gay and easy. He invited his guests to lay aside all restraint, and to forget that he was at the head of a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers, and was absolute master of the life and liberty of all who sat at meat with him. There was, therefore, at these parties the outward show of ease. The wit and learning of the company were ostentatiously displayed. The discussions on history and literature were often highly interesting. But the absurdity of all the religions known among men was the chief topic of conversation; and the audacity with which doctrines and names venerated throughout Christendom were treated on these occasions startled even persons accustomed to the society of French and English freethinkers. Real liberty, however, or real affection, was in this brilliant society not to be found. Absolute kings seldom have friends: and Frederic's faults were such as, even where perfect equality exists, make friendship exceedingly precarious. He had indeed many qualities which, on first acquaintance were captivating. His conversation was lively; his manners, to those whom he desired to please, were even caressing. No man could flatter with more delicacy. No man succeeded more completely in inspiring those who approached him with vague hopes of some great advantage from his

kindness. But under this fair exterior he was a tyrant, suspicious, disdainful, and malevolent. He had one taste which may be pardoned in a boy, but which, when habitually and deliberately indulged by a man of mature age and strong understanding, is almost invariably the sign of a bad heart — a taste for severe practical jokes. If a courtier was fond of dress, oil was flung over his richest suit. If he was fond of money, some prank was invented to make him disburse more than he could spare. If he was hypochondriachal, he was made to believe that he had the dropsy. If he had particularly set his heart on visiting a place, a letter was forged to frighten him from going hither. These things, it may be said, are trifles. They are so; but they are indications, not to be mistaken, of a nature to which the sight of human suffering and human degradation is an agreeable excitement.

Frederic had a keen eye for the foibles of others, and loved to communicate his discoveries. He had some talent for sarcasm, and considerable skill in detecting the sore places where sarcasm would be most acutely felt. His vanity, as well as his malignity, found gratification in the vexation and confusion of those who smarted under his caustic jests. Yet in truth his success on these occasions belonged quite as much to the king as to the wit. We read that Commodus descended, sword in hand, into the arena, against a wretched gladiator, armed only with a foil of lead, and, after shedding the blood of the helpless victim, struck medals to commemorate the inglorious victory. The triumphs of Frederic in the war of repartee were of much the same kind. How to deal with him was the most puzzling of questions. To appear constrained in his presence was to disobey his commands, and to spoil his amusement. Yet if his associates were enticed by his graciousness to indulge in the familiarity of a cordial intimacy, he was certain to make them repent of their presumption by some cruel humiliation. To resent his affronts was perilous; yet not to resent them was to deserve to invite them. In his view, those who mutinied were insolent and ungrateful; those who submitted were curs made to receive bones and kickings with the same fawning patience. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how anything short of the rage of hunger should have induced men to bear the misery of being the associates of the Great King. It was no lucrative post. His Majesty was as severe and economical in his friendships as in the other charges of his establishment, and as unlikely to give a rixdollar too much for his guests as for his dinners. The sum which he allowed to a poet or a philosopher was the very smallest sum for which such poet or philosopher could be induced to sell himself into slavery; and the bondsman might think himself fortunate, if what had been so grudgingly given was not, after years of suffering, rudely and arbitrarily withdrawn.

Potsdam was, in truth, what it was called by one of its most illustrious inmates, the Palace of Alcina. At the first glance it seemed to be a delightful spot, where every intellectual and physical enjoyment awaited

the happy adventurer. Every newcomer was received with eager hospitality, intoxicated with flattery, encouraged to expect prosperity and greatness. It was in vain that a long succession of favourites who had entered that abode with delight and hope, and who, after a short term of delusive happiness, had been doomed to expiate their folly by years of wretchedness and degradation, raised their voices to warn the aspirant who approached the charmed threshold. Some had wisdom enough to discover the truth early, and spirit enough to fly without looking back; others lingered on to a cheerless and unhonoured old age. We have no hesitation in saying that the poorest author of that time in London, sleeping on a bulk, dining in a cellar, with a cravat of paper, and a skewer for a shirt-pin, was a happier man than any of the literary inmates of Frederic's Court.

But of all who entered the enchanted garden in the inebriation of delight, and quitted it in agonies of rage and shame, the most remarkable was Voltaire. Many circumstances had made him desirous of finding a home at a distance from his country. His fame had raised him up enemies. His sensibility gave them a formidable advantage over him. They were, indeed, contemptible assailants. Of all that they wrote against him, nothing has survived except what he has himself preserved. But the constitution of his mind resembled the constitution of those bodies in which the slightest scratch of a bramble, or the bite of a gnat, never fails to fester. Though his reputation was rather raised than lowered by the abuse of such writers as Fréron and Desfontaines, though the vengeance which he took on Fréron and Desfontaines was such, that scourging, branding, pillorying, would have been a trifle to it, there is reason to believe that they gave him far more pain than he ever gave them. Though he enjoyed during his own lifetime the reputation of a classic, though he was extolled by his contemporaries above all poets, philosophers, and historians, though his works were read with as much delight and admiration at Moscow and Westminster, at Florence and Stockholm, as at Paris itself, he was yet tormented by that restless jealousy which should seem to belong only to minds burning with the desire of fame, and yet conscious of impotence. To men of letters who could by no possibility be his rivals, he was, if they behaved well to him, not merely just, not merely courteous, but often a hearty friend and a munificent benefactor. But to every writer who rose to a celebrity approaching his own, he became either a disguised or an avowed enemy. He slyly depreciated Montesquieu and Buffon. He publicly, and with violent outrage, made war on Rousseau. Nor had he the heart of hiding his feelings under the semblance of good humour or of contempt. With all his great talents, and all his long experience of the world, he had no more self-command than a petted child, or a hysterical woman. Whenever he was mortified, he exhausted the whole rhetoric of anger and sorrow to express his mortification. His torrents of bitter words, his stamping and cursing, his grimaces and his tears of rage, were a rich feast to those abject

natures, whose delight is in the agonies of powerful spirits and in the abasement of immortal names. These creatures had now found out a way of galling him to the very quick. In one walk, at least, it had been admitted by envy itself that he was without a living competitor. Since Racine had been laid among the great men whose dust made the holy precinct of Port-Royal holier, no tragic poet had appeared who could contest the palm with the author of *Zaire*, of *Alzire*, and of *Merope*. At length a rival was announced. Old Crébillon, who, many years before, had obtained some theatrical success, and who had long been forgotten, came forth from his garret in one of the meanest lanes near the Rue St. Antoine, and was welcomed by the acclamations of envious men of letters, and of a capricious populace. A thing called *Catiline*, which he had written in his retirement, was acted with boundless applause. Of this execrable piece it is sufficient to say, that the plot turns on a love affair, carried on in all the forms of Scudéry, between Catiline, whose confidant is the Prætor Lentulus, and Tullia, the daughter of Cicero. The theatre resounded with acclamations. The King pensioned the successful poet; and the coffee-houses pronounced that Voltaire was a clever man, but that the real tragic inspiration, the celestial fire which had glowed in Corneille and Racine, was to be found in Crébillon alone.

The blow went to Voltaire's heart. Had his wisdom and fortitude been in proportion to the fertility of his intellect, and to the brilliancy of his wit, he would have seen that it was out of the power of all the puffers and detractors in Europe to put Catiline above *Zaire*; but he had none of the magnanimous patience with which Milton and Bentley left their claims to the unerring judgment of time. He eagerly engaged in an undignified competition with Crébillon, and produced a series of plays on the same subjects which his rival had treated. These pieces were coolly received. Angry with the court, angry with the capital, Voltaire began to find pleasure in the prospect of exile. His attachment for Madame du Châtelet long prevented him from executing his purpose. Her death set him at liberty; and he determined to take refuge at Berlin.

To Berlin he was invited by a series of letters, couched in terms of the most enthusiastic friendship and admiration. For once the rigid parsimony of Frederic seemed to have relaxed. Orders, honourable offices, a liberal pension, a well-served table, stately apartments under a royal roof, were offered in return for the pleasure and honour which were expected from the society of the first wit of the age. A thousand louis were remitted for the charges of the journey. No ambassador setting out from Berlin for a court of the first rank, had ever been more amply supplied. But Voltaire was not satisfied. At a later period, when he possessed an ample fortune, he was one of the most liberal of men; but till his means had become equal to his wishes, his greediness for lucre was unrestrained either by justice or by shame. He had the effrontery to ask for a thousand louis more, in order

to enable him to bring his niece, Madame Denis, the ugliest of coquettes, in his company. The indelicate rapacity of the poet produced its natural effect on the severe and frugal King. The answer was a dry refusal. "I did not," said his Majesty, "solicit the honour of the lady's society." On this, Voltaire went off into a paroxysm of childish rage. "Was there ever such avarice? He has hundreds of tubs full of dollars in his vaults, and haggles with me about a poor thousand louis." It seemed that the negotiation would be broken off: but Frederic, with great dexterity, affected indifference, and seemed inclined to transfer his idolatry to Baculard D'Arnaud. His Majesty even wrote some bad verses, of which the sense was, that Voltaire was a setting sun, and that D'Arnaud was rising. Good-natured friends soon carried the lines to Voltaire. He was in his bed. He jumped out in his shirt, danced about the room with rage, and sent for his passport and his post-horses. It was not difficult to foresee the end of a connexion which had such a beginning.

It was in the year 1750 that Voltaire left the great capital, which he was not to see again till, after the lapse of near thirty years, he returned bowed down by extreme old age, to die in the midst of a splendid and ghastly triumph. His reception in Prussia was such as might well have elated a less vain and excitable mind. He wrote to his friends at Paris, that the kindness and the attention with which he had been welcomed surpassed description, that the King was the most amiable of men, that Potsdam was the paradise of philosophers. He was created chamberlain, and received, together with his gold key, the cross of an order, and a patent ensuring to him a pension of eight hundred pounds sterling a year for life. A hundred and sixty pounds a year were promised to his niece if she survived him. The royal cooks and coachmen were put at his disposal. He was lodged in the same apartments in which Saxe had lived, when, at the height of power and glory, he visited Prussia. Frederic, indeed, stooped for a time even to use the language of adulation. He pressed to his lips the meagre hand of the little grinning skeleton, whom he regarded as the dispenser of immortal renown. He would add, he said, to the titles which he owed to his ancestors and his sword, another title, derived from his last and proudest acquisition. His style should run thus: Frederic, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, Sovereign Duke of Silesia, Possessor of Voltaire. But even amidst the delights of the honeymoon, Voltaire's sensitive vanity began to take alarm. A few days after his arrival, he could not help telling his niece that the amiable King had a trick of giving a sly scratch with one hand while patting and stroking with the other. Soon came hints not the less alarming, because mysterious. "The supper parties are delicious. The King is the life of the company. But — I have operas and comedies, reviews and concerts, my studies and books. But — but — Berlin is fine, the princesses charming, the maids of honour handsome. But —"

This eccentric friendship was fast cooling. Never had there met two persons so exquisitely fitted to plague each other. Each of them had exactly the fault of which the other was most impatient; and they were, in different ways, the most impatient of mankind. Frederic was frugal, almost niggardly. When he had secured his plaything he began to think that he had bought it too dear. Voltaire, on the other hand, was greedy, even to the extent of imprudence and knavery; and conceived that the favourite of a monarch who had barrels full of gold and silver laid up in cellars ought to make a fortune which a receiver-general might envy. They soon discovered each other's feelings. Both were angry; and a war began, in which Frederic stooped to the part of Harpagon, and Voltaire to that of Scapin. It is humiliating to relate, that the great warrior and statesman gave orders that his guest's allowance of sugar and chocolate should be curtailed. It is, if possible, a still more humiliating fact, that Voltaire indemnified himself by pocketing the wax candles in the royal antechamber. Disputes about money, however, were not the most serious disputes of these extraordinary associates. The sarcasms of the King soon galled the sensitive temper of the poet. D'Arnaud and D'Argens, Guichard and La Métrie, might, for the sake of a morsel of bread, be willing to bear the insolence of a master; but Voltaire was of another order. He knew that he was a potentate as well as Frederic, that his European reputation, and his incomparable power of covering whatever he hated with ridicule, made him an object of dread even to the leaders of armies and the rulers of nations. In truth, of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire. Bigots and tyrants, who had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name. Principles unassailable by reason, principles which had withstood the fiercest attacks of power, the most valuable truths, the most generous sentiments, the noblest and most graceful images, the purest reputations, the most august institutions, began to look mean and loathsome as soon as that withering smile was turned upon them. To every opponent, however strong in his cause and his talents, in his station and his character, who ventured to encounter the great scoffer, might be addressed the caution which was given of old to the Archangel: —

*"I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow: neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though temper'd heavenly; for that fatal dint,
Save Him who reigns above, none can resist."*

We cannot pause to recount how often that rare talent was exercised against rivals worthy of esteem; how often it was used to crush and torture enemies worthy only of silent disdain; how often it was perverted to the more noxious purpose of destroying the last solace of earthly misery,

and the last restraint on earthly power. Neither can we pause to tell how often it was used to vindicate justice, humanity, and toleration, the principles of sound philosophy, the principles of free government. This is not the place for a full character of Voltaire.

Causes of quarrel multiplied fast. Voltaire, who, partly from love of money, and partly from love of excitement, was always fond of stock-jobbing, became implicated in transactions of at least a dubious character. The King was delighted at having such an opportunity to humble his guest; and bitter reproaches and complaints were exchanged. Voltaire, too, was soon at war with the other men of letters who surrounded the King; and this irritated Frederic, who, however, had himself chiefly to blame: for, from that love of tormenting which was in him a ruling passion, he perpetually lavished extravagant praises on small men and bad books, merely in order that he might enjoy the mortification and rage which on such occasions Voltaire took no pains to conceal. His Majesty, however, soon had reason to regret the pains which he had taken to kindle jealousy among the members of his household. The whole palace was in a ferment with literary intrigues and cabals. It was to no purpose that the imperial voice, which kept a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers in order, was raised to quiet the contention of the exasperated wits. It was far easier to stir up such a storm than to lull it. Nor was Frederic, in his capacity of wit, by any means without his own share of vexations. He had sent a large quantity of verses to Voltaire, and requested that they might be returned, with remarks and corrections. "See," exclaimed Voltaire, "what a quantity of his dirty linen the King has sent me to wash!" Talebearers were not wanting to carry the sarcasm to the royal ear; and Frederic was as much incensed as a Grub Street writer who had found his name in the *Dunciad*.

This could not last. A circumstance which, when the mutual regard of the friends was in its first glow, would merely have been matter for laughter, produced a violent explosion. Maupertuis enjoyed as much of Frederic's goodwill as any man of letters. He was President of the Academy of Berlin; and he stood second to Voltaire, though at an immense distance, in the literary society which had been assembled at the Prussian Court. Frederic had, by playing for his own amusement on the feelings of the two jealous and vainglorious Frenchmen, succeeded in producing a bitter enmity between them. Voltaire resolved to set his mark, a mark never to be effaced, on the forehead of Maupertuis, and wrote the exquisitely ludicrous *Diatribes of Doctor Akakia*. He showed this little piece to Frederic, who had too much taste and too much malice not to relish such delicious pleasantry. In truth, even at this time of day, it is not easy for any person who has the least perception of the ridiculous to read the jokes on the Latin city, the Patagonians, and the hole to the centre of the earth, without laughing till he cries. But though Frederic was di-

verted by this charming pasquinade, he was unwilling that it should get abroad. His self-love was interested. He had selected Maupertuis to fill the chair of his Academy. If all Europe were taught to laugh at Maupertuis, would not the reputation of the Academy, would not even the dignity of its royal patron, be in some degree compromised? The King, therefore, begged Voltaire to suppress this performance. Voltaire promised to do so, and broke his word. The *Diatribes* was published, and received with shouts of merriment and applause by all who could read the French language. The King stormed. Voltaire, with his usual disregard of truth, asserted his innocence, and made up some lie about a printer or an amanuensis. The King was not to be so imposed upon. He ordered the pamphlet to be burned by the common hangman, and insisted upon having an apology from Voltaire, couched in the most abject terms. Voltaire sent back to the King his cross, his key, and the patent of his pension. After this burst of rage, the strange pair began to be ashamed of their violence, and went through the forms of reconciliation. But the breach was irreparable; and Voltaire took his leave of Frederic for ever. They parted with cold civility; but their hearts were big with resentment. Voltaire had in his keeping a volume of the King's poetry, and forgot to return it. This was, we believe, merely one of the oversights which men setting out upon a journey often commit. That Voltaire could have meditated plagiarism is quite incredible. He would not, we are confident, for the half of Frederic's kingdom, have consented to father Frederic's verses. The King, however, who rated his own writings much above their value, and who was inclined to see all Voltaire's actions in the worst light, was enraged to think that his favourite compositions were in the hands of an enemy, as thievish as a daw and as mischievous as a monkey. In the anger excited by this thought, he lost sight of reason and decency, and determined on committing an outrage at once odious and ridiculous.

Voltaire had reached Frankfort. His niece, Madame Denis, came thither to meet him. He conceived himself secure from the power of his late master, when he was arrested by order of the Prussian resident. The precious volume was delivered up. But the Prussian agents had, no doubt, been instructed not to let Voltaire escape without some gross indignity. He was confined twelve days in a wretched hovel. Sentinels with fixed bayonets kept guard over him. His niece was dragged through the mire by the soldiers. Sixteen hundred dollars were extorted from him by his insolent gaolers. It is absurd to say that this outrage is not attributed to the King. Was anybody punished for it? Was anybody called in question for it? Was it not consistent with Frederic's character? Was it not of a piece with his conduct on other similar occasions? Is it not notorious that he repeatedly gave private directions to his officers to pillage and demolish the houses of persons against whom he had a grudge, charging them at the same time to take their measures in such a way that his name might not

be compromised? He acted thus toward Count Bruhl in the Seven Years' War. Why should we believe that he would have been more scrupulous with regard to Voltaire?

When at length the illustrious prisoner regained his liberty, the prospect before him was but dreary. He was an exile both from the country of his birth and from the country of his adoption. The French Government had taken offence at his journey to Prussia, and would not permit him to return to Paris; and in the vicinity of Prussia it was not safe for him to remain.

He took refuge on the beautiful shores of Lake Lemman. There, loosed from every tie which had hitherto restrained him, and having little to hope or to fear from courts and churches, he began his long war against all that, whether for good or evil, had authority over man; for what Burke said of the Constituent Assembly, was eminently true of this its great forerunner: Voltaire could not build: he could only pull down: he was the very Vitruvius of ruin. He has bequeathed to us not a single doctrine to be called by his name, not a single addition to the stock of our positive knowledge. But no human teacher ever left behind him so vast and terrible a wreck of truths and falsehoods, of things noble and things base, of things useful and things pernicious. From the time when his sojourn beneath the Alps commenced, the dramatist, the wit, the historian, was merged in a more important character. He was now the patriarch, the founder of a sect, the chief of a conspiracy, the prince of a wide intellectual commonwealth. He often enjoyed a pleasure dear to the better part of his nature, the pleasure of vindicating innocence which had no other helper, of repairing cruel wrongs, of punishing tyranny in high places. He had also the satisfaction, not less acceptable to his ravenous vanity, of hearing terrified Capuchins call him the Antichrist. But whether employed in works of benevolence, or in works of mischief, he never forgot Potsdam and Frankfort; and he listened anxiously to every murmur which indicated that a tempest was gathering in Europe, and that his vengeance was at hand.

He soon had his wish. Maria Theresa had never for a moment forgotten the great wrong which she had received at the hand of Frederic. Young and delicate, just left an orphan, just about to be a mother, she had been compelled to fly from the ancient capital of her race; she had seen her fair inheritance dismembered by robbers, and of those robbers he had been the foremost. Without a pretext, without a provocation, in defiance of the most sacred engagements, he had attacked the helpless ally whom he was bound to defend. The Empress Queen had the faults as well as the virtues which are connected with quick sensibility and a high spirit. There was no peril which she was not ready to brave, no calamity which she was not ready to bring on her subjects, or on the whole human race, if only she might once taste the sweetness of a complete revenge. Revenge, too, pre-

sented itself, to her narrow and superstitious mind, in the guise of duty. Silesia had been wrested not only from the House of Austria, but from the Church of Rome. The conqueror had indeed permitted his new subjects to worship God after their own fashion; but this was not enough. To bigotry it seemed an intolerable hardship that the Catholic Church, having long enjoyed ascendancy, should be compelled to content itself with equality. Nor was this the only circumstance which led Maria Theresa to regard her enemy as the enemy of God. The profaneness of Frederic's writings and conversation, and the frightful rumours which were circulated respecting the immorality of his private life, naturally shocked a woman who believed with the firmest faith all that her confessor told her, and who, though surrounded by temptations, though young and beautiful, though ardent in all her passions, though possessed of absolute power, had preserved her fame unsullied even by the breath of slander.

To recover Silesia, to humble the dynasty of Hohenzollern to the dust, was the great object of her life. She toiled during many years for this end, with zeal as indefatigable as that which the poet ascribed to the stately goddess who tired out her immortal horses in the work of raising the nations against Troy, and who offered to give up to destruction her darling Sparta and Mycenæ, if only she might once see the smoke going up from the palace of Priam. With even such a spirit did the proud Austrian Juno strive to array against her foe a coalition such as Europe had never seen. Nothing would content her but that whole civilized world, from the White Sea to the Adriatic, from the Bay of Biscay to the pastures of the wild horses of the Tanais, should be combined in arms against one petty State.

She early succeeded by various arts in obtaining the adhesion of Russia. An ample share of spoil was promised to the King of Poland; and that prince, governed by his favourite, Count Bruhl, readily promised the assistance of the Saxon forces. The great difficulty was with France. That the Houses of Bourbon and of Hapsburg should ever cordially coöperate in any great scheme of European policy, had long been thought, to use the strong expression of Frederic, just as impossible as that fire and water should amalgamate. The whole history of the Continent, during two centuries and a half, had been the history of the mutual jealousies and enmities of France and Austria. Since the administration of Richelieu, above all, it had been considered as the plain policy of the Most Christian King to thwart on all occasions the Court of Vienna, and to protect every member of the Germanic body who stood up against the dictation of the Cæsars. Common sentiments of religion had been unable to mitigate this strong antipathy. The rulers of France, even while clothed in the Roman purple, even while persecuting the heretics of Rochelle and Auvergne, had still looked with favour on the Lutheran and Calvinistic princes who were struggling against the chief of the empire. If the French ministers paid

any respect to the traditional rules handed down to them through many generations, they would have acted towards Frederic as the greatest of their predecessors acted towards Gustavus Adolphus. That there was deadly enmity between Prussia and Austria was of itself a sufficient reason for close friendship between Prussia and France. With France Frederic could never have any serious controversy. His territories were so situated that his ambition, greedy and unscrupulous as it was, could never impel him to attack her of his own accord. He was more than half a Frenchman: he wrote, spoke, read nothing but French: he delighted in French society: the admiration of the French he proposed to himself as the best reward of all his exploits. It seemed incredible that any French Government, however notorious for levity or stupidity, could spurn away such an ally.

The Court of Vienna, however, did not despair. The Austrian diplomats propounded a new scheme of politics, which, it must be owned, was not altogether without plausibility. The great powers, according to this theory, had long been under a delusion. They had looked on each other as natural enemies, while in truth they were natural allies. A succession of cruel wars had devastated Europe, had thinned the population, had exhausted the public resources, had loaded governments with an immense burden of debt; and when, after two hundred years of murderous hostility or of hollow truce, the illustrious Houses whose enmity had distracted the world sat down to count their gains, to what did the real advantage on either side amount? Simply to this, that they had kept each other from thriving. It was not the King of France, it was not the Emperor, who had reaped the fruits of the Thirty Years' War, or of the War of the Pragmatic Sanction. These fruits had been pilfered by states of the second and third rank, which, secured against jealousy by their insignificance, had dexterously aggrandized themselves while pretending to serve the animosity of the great chiefs of Christendom. While the lion and tiger were tearing each other, the jackal had run off into the jungle with the prey. The real gainer by the Thirty Years' War had been neither France nor Austria, but Sweden. The real gainer by the War of the Pragmatic Sanction had been neither France nor Austria, but the upstart Brandenburg. France had made great efforts, had added largely to her military glory, and largely to her public burdens; and for what end? Merely that Frederic might rule Silesia. For this and this alone one French army, wasted by sword and famine, had perished in Bohemia; and another had purchased with floods of the noblest blood, the barren glory of Fontenoy. And this prince, for whom France had suffered so much, was he a grateful, was he even an honest ally? Had he not been as false to the Court of Versailles as to the Court of Vienna? Had he not played, on a large scale, the same part which, in private life, is played by the vile agent of chicane who sets his neighbours quarrelling, involves them in costly and interminable litiga-

tion, and betrays them to each other all round, certain that, whoever may be ruined, he shall be enriched? Surely the true wisdom of the great powers was to attack, not each other, but this common barrator, who, by inflaming the passions of both, by pretending to serve both, and by deserting both, had raised himself above the station to which he was born. The great object of Austria was to regain Silesia: the great object of France was to obtain an accession of territory on the side of Flanders. If they took opposite sides, the result would probably be that, after a war of many years, after the slaughter of many thousands of brave men, after the waste of many millions of crowns, they would lay down their arms without having achieved either object: but, if they came to an understanding, there would be no risk, and no difficulty. Austria would willingly make in Belgium such cessions as France could not expect to obtain by ten pitched battles. Silesia would easily be annexed to the monarchy of which it had long been a part. The union of two such powerful governments would at once overawe the King of Prussia. If he resisted, one short campaign would settle his fate. France and Austria, long accustomed to rise from the game of war both losers, would, for the first time, both be gainers. There could be no room for jealousy between them. The power of both would be increased at once; the equilibrium between them would be preserved; and the only sufferer would be a mischievous and unprincipled buccaneer, who deserved no tenderness from either.

These doctrines, attractive from their novelty and ingenuity, soon became fashionable at the supper-parties and in the coffee-houses of Paris, and were espoused by every gay marquis and every facetious abbé who was admitted to see Madame de Pompadour's hair curled and powdered. It was not, however, to any political theory that the strange coalition between France and Austria owed its origin. The real motive which induced the great continental powers to forget their old animosities and their old state maxims was personal aversion to the King of Prussia. This feeling was strongest in Maria Theresa; but it was by no means confined to her. Frederic, in some respects a good master, was emphatically a bad neighbour. That he was hard in all dealings, and quick to take all advantages, was not his most odious fault. His bitter and scoffing speech had inflicted keener wounds than his ambition. In his character of wit he was under less restraint than even in his character of ruler. Satirical verses against all the princes and ministers of Europe were ascribed to his pen. In his letters and conversation he alluded to the greatest potentates of the age in terms which would have better suited Collé, in a war of repartee with young Crébillon at Pelletier's table, than a great sovereign speaking of great sovereigns. About women he was in the habit of expressing himself in a manner which it was impossible for the meekest of women to forgive; and, unfortunately for him, almost the whole Continent was then governed by women who were by no means conspicuous for meekness. Maria Theresa

herself had not escaped his scurrilous jests. The Empress Elizabeth of Russia knew that her gallantries afforded him a favourite theme for ribaldry and invective. Madame de Pompadour, who was really the head of the French Government, had been even more keenly galled. She had attempted, by the most delicate flattery, to propitiate the King of Prussia; but her messages had drawn from him only dry and sarcastic replies. The Empress Queen took a very different course. Though the haughtiest of princesses, though the most austere of matrons, she forgot in her thirst for revenge both the dignity of her race and the purity of her character, and condescended to flatter the low-born and low-minded concubine, who, having acquired influence by prostituting herself, retained it by prostituting others. Maria Theresa actually wrote with her own hand a note, full of expressions of esteem and friendship to her dear cousin, the daughter of the butcher Poisson, the wife of the publican D'Etiolles, the kidnapper of young girls for the harem of an old rake, a strange cousin for the descendant of so many Emperors of the West! The mistress was completely gained over, and easily carried her point with Lewis, who had, indeed, wrongs of his own to resent. His feelings were not quick, but contempt, says the Eastern proverb, pierces even through the shell of the tortoise; and neither prudence nor decorum had ever restrained Frederic from expressing his measureless contempt for the sloth, the imbecility, and the baseness of Lewis. France was thus induced to join the coalition; and the example of France determined the conduct of Sweden, then completely subject to French influence.

The enemies of Frederic were surely strong enough to attack him openly; but they were desirous to add to all their other advantages the advantage of a surprise. He was not, however, a man to be taken off his guard. He had tools in every Court; and he now received from Vienna, from Dresden, and from Paris, accounts so circumstantial and so consistent, that he could not doubt of his danger. He learnt, that he was to be assailed at once by France, Austria, Russia, Saxony, Sweden, and the Germanic body; that the greater part of his dominions was to be portioned out among his enemies; that France, which from her geographical position could not directly share in his spoils, was to receive an equivalent in the Netherlands; that Austria was to have Silesia, and the Czarina East Prussia; that Augustus of Saxony expected Magdeburg; and that Sweden would be rewarded with part of Pomerania. If these designs succeeded, the House of Brandenburg would at once sink in the European system to a place lower than that of the Duke of Würtemberg or the Margrave of Baden.

And what hope was there that these designs would fail? No such union of the continental powers had been seen for ages. A less formidable confederacy had in a week conquered all the provinces of Venice, when Venice was at the height of power, wealth, and glory. A less formidable confederacy had compelled Lewis the Fourteenth to bow down his haughty head

to the very earth. A less formidable confederacy has, within our own memory, subjugated a still mightier empire, and abused a still prouder name. Such odds had never been heard of in war. The people whom Frederic ruled were not five millions. The population of the countries which were leagued against him amounted to a hundred millions. The disproportion in wealth was at least equally great. Small communities, actuated by strong sentiments of patriotism or loyalty, have sometimes made head against great monarchies weakened by factions and discontents. But small as was Frederic's kingdom, it probably contained a greater number of disaffected subjects than were to be found in all the states of his enemies. Silesia formed a fourth part of his dominions; and from the Silesians, born under Austrian princes, the utmost that he could expect was apathy. From the Silesian Catholics he could hardly expect anything but resistance.

Some states have been enabled, by their geographical position, to defend themselves with advantage against immense force. The sea has repeatedly protected England against the fury of the whole Continent. The Venetian Government, driven from its possessions on the land, could still bid defiance to the confederates of Cambray from the arsenal amidst the lagoons. More than one great and well appointed army, which regarded the shepherds of Switzerland as an easy prey, has perished in the passes of the Alps. Frederic had no such advantage. The form of his states, their situation, the nature of the ground, all were against him. His long, scattered, straggling territory seemed to have been shaped with an express view to the convenience of invaders, and was protected by no sea, by no chain of hills. Scarcely any corner of it was a week's march from the territory of the enemy. The capital itself, in the event of war, would be constantly exposed to insult. In truth there was hardly a politician or a soldier in Europe who doubted that the conflict would be terminated in a very few days by the prostration of the House of Brandenburg.

Nor was Frederic's own opinion very different. He anticipated nothing short of his own ruin, and of the ruin of his family. Yet there was still a chance, a slender chance, of escape. His states had at least the advantage of a central position; his enemies were widely separated from each other, and could not conveniently unite their overwhelming forces on one point. They inhabited different climates, and it was probable that the season of the year which would be best suited to the military operations of one portion of the League, would be unfavourable to those of another portion. The Prussian monarchy, too, was free from some infirmities which were found in empires far more extensive and magnificent. Its effective strength for a desperate struggle was not to be measured merely by the number of square miles or the number of people. In that spare but well-knit and well-exercised body, there was nothing but sinew, and muscle and bone. No public creditors looked for dividends. No distant colonies required defence. No Court, filled with flatterers and mistresses, devoured the pay of fifty

battalions. The Prussian army, though far inferior in number to the troops which were to be opposed to it, was yet strong out of all proportion to the extent of the Prussian dominions. It was also admirably trained and admirably officered, accustomed to obey and accustomed to conquer. The revenue was not only unencumbered by debt, but exceeded the ordinary outlay in time of peace. Alone of all the European princes, Frederic had a treasure laid up for a day of difficulty. Above all, he was one, and his enemies were many. In their camps would certainly be found the jealousy, the dissension, the slackness inseparable from coalitions; on his side was the energy, the unity, the secrecy of a strong dictatorship. To a certain extent the deficiency of military means might be supplied by the resources of military art. Small as the King's army was, when compared with the six hundred thousand men whom the confederates could bring into the field, celerity of movement might in some degree compensate for deficiency of bulk. It was thus just possible that genius, judgment, resolution, and good luck united, might protract the struggle during a campaign or two; and to gain even a month was of importance. It could not be long before the vices which are found in all extensive confederacies would begin to show themselves. Every member of the League would think his own share of the war too large, and his own share of the spoils too small. Complaints and recriminations would abound. The Turk might stir on the Danube; the statesmen of France might discover the error which they had committed in abandoning the fundamental principles of their national policy. Above all, death might rid Prussia of its most formidable enemies. The war was the effect of the personal aversion with which three or four sovereigns regarded Frederic; and the decease of any one of those sovereigns might produce a complete revolution in the state of Europe.

In the midst of a horizon generally dark and stormy, Frederic could discern one bright spot. The peace which had been concluded between England and France in 1748, had been in Europe no more than an armistice; and had not even been an armistice in the other quarters of the globe. In India the sovereignty of the Carnatic was disputed between two great Mussulman houses; Fort Saint George had taken one side, Pondicherry the other; and in a series of battles and sieges the troops of Lawrence and Clive had been opposed to those of Dupleix. A struggle less important in its consequences, but not less likely to produce irritation, was carried on between those French and English adventurers, who kidnapped negroes and collected gold dust on the coast of Guinea. But it was in North America that the emulation and mutual aversion of the two nations were most conspicuous. The French attempted to hem in the English colonists by a chain of military posts, extending from the Great Lakes to the mouth of the Mississippi. The English took arms. The wild aboriginal tribes appeared on each side mingled with the Pale-faces. Battles were fought;

forts were stormed; and hideous stories about stakes, scalplings, and death-songs reached Europe, and inflamed that national animosity which the rivalry of ages had produced. The disputes between France and England came to a crisis at the very time when the tempest which had been gathering was about to burst on Prussia. The tastes and interests of Frederic would have led him, if he had been allowed an option, to side with the House of Bourbon. But the folly of the Court of Versailles left him no choice. France became the tool of Austria; and Frederic was forced to become the ally of England. He could not, indeed, expect that a power which covered the sea with its fleets, and which had to make war at once on the Ohio and the Ganges, would be able to spare a large number of troops for operations in Germany. But England, though poor compared with the England of our time, was far richer than any country on the Continent. The amount of her revenue, and the resources which she found in her credit, though they may be thought small by a generation which has seen her raise a hundred and thirty millions in a single year, appeared miraculous to the politicians of that age. A very moderate portion of her wealth, expended by an able and economical prince, in a country where prices were low, would be sufficient to equip and maintain a formidable army.

Such was the situation in which Frederic found himself. He saw the whole extent of his peril. He saw that there was still a faint possibility of escape; and, with prudent temerity, he determined to strike the first blow. It was in the month of August 1756, that the great war of the Seven Years commenced. The King demanded of the Empress Queen a distinct explanation of her intentions, and plainly told her that he should consider a refusal as a declaration of war. "I want," he said, "no answer in the style of an oracle." He received an answer at once haughty and evasive. In an instant the rich electorate of Saxony was overflowed by sixty thousand Prussian troops. Augustus with his army occupied a strong position at Pirna. The Queen of Poland was at Dresden. In a few days Pirna was blockaded and Dresden was taken. The first object of Frederic was to obtain possession of the Saxon State papers; for those papers, he well knew, contained ample proofs that, though apparently an aggressor, he was really acting in self-defence. The Queen of Poland, as well acquainted as Frederic with the importance of those documents, had packed them up, had concealed them in her bedchamber, and was about to send them off to Warsaw, when a Prussian officer made his appearance. In the hope that no soldier would venture to outrage a lady, a queen, a daughter of an emperor, the mother-in-law of a dauphin, she placed herself before the trunk, and at length sat down on it. But all resistance was vain. The papers were carried to Frederic, who found in them, as he expected, abundant evidence of the designs of the coalition. The most important documents were instantly published, and the effect of the publication was great. It

was clear that, of whatever sins the King of Prussia might formerly have been guilty, he was now the injured party, and had merely anticipated a blow intended to destroy him.

The Saxon camp at Pirna was in the meantime closely invested; but the besieged were not without hopes of succour. A great Austrian army under Marshal Brown was about to pour through the passes which separate Bohemia from Saxony. Frederic left at Pirna a force sufficient to deal with the Saxons, hastened into Bohemia, encountered Brown at Lowositz, and defeated him. This battle decided the fate of Saxony. Augustus and his favourite Bruhl fled to Poland. The whole army of the Electorate capitulated. From that time till the end of the war, Frederic treated Saxony as a part of his dominions, or, rather, he acted towards the Saxons in a manner which may serve to illustrate the whole meaning of that tremendous sentence, "*subjectos tanquam suos, viles tanquam alienos.*" Saxony was as much in his power as Brandenburg; and he had no such interest in the welfare of Saxony as he had in the welfare of Brandenburg. He accordingly levied troops and exacted contributions throughout the enslaved province, with far more rigour than in any part of his own dominions. Seventeen thousand men who had been in the camp at Pirna were half compelled, half persuaded to enlist under their conqueror. Thus, within a few weeks from the commencement of hostilities, one of the confederates had been disarmed, and his weapons were now pointed against the rest.

The winter put a stop to military operations. All had hitherto gone well. But the real tug of war was still to come. It was easy to foresee that the year 1757 would be a memorable era in the history of Europe.

The King's scheme for the campaign was simple, bold, and judicious. The Duke of Cumberland with an English and Hanoverian army was in Western Germany, and might be able to prevent the French troops from attacking Prussia. The Russians, confined by their snows, would probably not stir till the spring was far advanced. Saxony was prostrated. Sweden could do nothing very important. During a few months Frederic would have to deal with Austria alone. Even thus the odds were against him. But ability and courage have often triumphed against odds still more formidable.

Early in 1757 the Prussian army in Saxony began to move. Through four defiles in the mountains they came pouring into Bohemia. Prague was the King's first mark; but the ulterior object was probably Vienna. At Prague lay Marshal Brown with one great army. Daun, the most cautious and fortunate of the Austrian captains, was advancing with another. Frederic determined to overwhelm Brown before Daun should arrive. On the sixth of May was fought, under those walls which, a hundred and thirty years before, had witnessed the victory of the Catholic league and the flight of the unhappy Palatine, a battle more bloody than any which Europe saw during the long interval between Malplaquet and Eylau. The King and

Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick were distinguished on that day by their valour and exertions. But the chief glory was with Schwerin. When the Prussian infantry wavered, the stout old marshal snatched the colours from an ensign, and, waving them in the air, led back his regiment to the charge. Thus at seventy-two years of age he fell in the thickest battle, still grasping the standard which bears the black eagle on the field argent. The victory remained with the King; but it had been dearly purchased. Whole columns of his bravest warriors had fallen. He admitted that he had lost eighteen thousand men. Of the enemy, twenty-four thousand had been killed, wounded, or taken.

Part of the defeated army was shut up in Prague. Part fled to join the troops which, under the command of Daun, were now close at hand. Frederic determined to play over the same game which had succeeded at Lowositz. He left a large force to besiege Prague, and at the head of thirty thousand men he marched against Daun. The cautious Marshal, though he had a great superiority in numbers, would risk nothing. He occupied at Kolin a position almost impregnable, and awaited the attack of the King.

It was the eighteenth of June, a day which, if the Greek superstition still retained its influence, would be held sacred to Nemesis, a day on which the two greatest princes of modern times were taught, by a terrible experience, that neither skill nor valour can fix the inconstancy of fortune. The battle began before noon; and part of the Prussian army maintained the contest till after the midsummer sun had gone down. But at length the King found that his troops, having been repeatedly driven back with frightful carnage, could no longer be led to the charge. He was with difficulty persuaded to quit the field. The officers of his personal staff were under the necessity of expostulating with him, and one of them took the liberty to say, "Does your Majesty mean to storm the batteries alone?" Thirteen thousand of his bravest followers had perished. Nothing remained for him but to retreat in good order, to raise the siege of Prague, and to hurry his army by different routes out of Bohemia.

This stroke seemed to be final. Frederic's situation had at best been such, that only an uninterrupted run of good luck could save him, as it seemed, from ruin. And now, almost in the outset of the contest he had met with a check which, even in a war between equal powers, would have been felt as serious. He had owed much to the opinion which all Europe entertained of his army. Since his accession, his soldiers had in many successive battles been victorious over the Austrians. But the glory had departed from his arms. All whom his malevolent sarcasms had wounded, made haste to avenge themselves by scoffing at the scoffer. His soldiers had ceased to confide in his star. In every part of his camp his dispositions were severely criticized. Even in his own family he had detractors. His next brother, William, heir-presumptive, or rather, in truth, heir-apparent to the throne, and great-grandfather of the present King, could not refrain

from lamenting his own fate and that of the House of Hohenzollern, once so great and so prosperous, but now, by the rash ambition of its chief, made a by-word to all nations. These complaints, and some blunders which William committed during the retreat from Bohemia, called forth the bitter displeasure of the inexorable King. The prince's heart was broken by the cutting reproaches of his brother; he quitted the army, retired to a country seat, and in a short time died of shame and vexation.

It seemed that the King's distress could hardly be increased. Yet at this moment another blow not less terrible than that of Kolin fell upon him. The French under Marshal D'Estrées had invaded Germany. The Duke of Cumberland had given them battle at Hastenbeck, and had been defeated. In order to save the Electorate of Hanover from entire subjugation, he had made, at Closter Seven, an arrangement with the French Generals, which left them at liberty to turn their arms against the Prussian dominions.

That nothing might be wanting to Frederic's distress, he lost his mother just at this time; and he appears to have felt the loss more than was to be expected from the hardness and severity of his character. In truth, his misfortunes had now cut to the quick. The mocker, the tyrant, the most rigorous, the most imperious, the most cynical of men, was very unhappy. His face was so haggard, and his form so thin, that when on his return from Bohemia he passed through Leipsic, the people hardly knew him again. His sleep was broken; the tears, in spite of himself, often started into his eyes; and the grave began to present itself to his agitated mind as the best refuge from misery and dishonour. His resolution was fixed never to be taken alive, and never to make peace on condition of descending from his place among the powers of Europe. He saw nothing left for him except to die; and he deliberately chose his mode of death. He always carried about with him a sure and speedy poison in a small glass case; and to the few in whom he placed confidence, he made no mystery of his resolution.

But we should very imperfectly describe the state of Frederic's mind, if we left out of view the laughable peculiarities which contrasted so singularly with the gravity, energy, and harshness of his character. It is difficult to say whether the tragic or the comic predominated in the strange scene which was then acting. In the midst of all the great King's calamities, his passion for writing indifferent poetry grew stronger and stronger. Enemies all round him, despair in his heart, pills of corrosive sublimate hidden in his clothes, he poured forth hundreds upon hundreds of lines, hateful to gods and men, the insipid dregs of Voltaire's Hippocrène, the faint echo of the lyre of Chaulieu. It is amusing to compare what he did during the last months of 1757, with what he wrote during the same time. It may be doubted whether any equal portion of the life of Hannibal, of Cæsar, or of Napoleon, will bear a comparison with that short period, the most brilliant

in the history of Prussia and of Frederic. Yet at this very time the scanty leisure of the illustrious warrior was employed in producing odes and epistles, a little better than Cibber's, and a little worse than Hayley's. Here and there a manly sentiment which deserves to be in prose makes its appearance in company with Prometheus and Orpheus, Elysium and Acheron, the Plaintive Philomel, the poppies of Morpheus, and all the other frippery which, like a robe tossed by a proud beauty to her waiting woman, has long been contemptuously abandoned by genius to mediocrity. We hardly know any instance of the strength and weakness of human nature so striking, and so grotesque, as the character of this haughty, vigilant, resolute, sagacious blue-stockings, half Mithridates and half Trissotin, bearing up against a world in arms, with an ounce of poison in one pocket and a quire of bad verses in the other.

Frederic had some time before made advances towards a reconciliation with Voltaire; and some civil letters had passed between them. After the battle of Kolin their epistolary intercourse became, at least in seeming, friendly and confidential. We do not know any collection of Letters which throws so much light on the darkest and most intricate parts of human nature, as the correspondence of these strange beings after they had exchanged forgiveness. Both felt that the quarrel had lowered them in the public estimation. They admired each other. They stood in need of each other. The great King wished to be handed down to posterity by the great Writer. The great Writer felt himself exalted by the homage of the great King. Yet the wounds which they had inflicted on each other were too deep to be effaced, or even perfectly healed. Not only did the scars remain; the sore places often festered and bled afresh. The letters consisted for the most part of compliments, thanks, offers of service, assurances of attachment. But if anything brought back to Frederic's recollection the cunning and mischievous pranks by which Voltaire had provoked him, some expression of contempt and displeasure broke forth in the midst of eulogy. It was much worse when anything recalled to the mind of Voltaire the outrages which he and his kinswoman had suffered at Frankfort. All at once his flowing panegyric was turned into invective. "Remember how you behaved to me. For your sake I have lost the favour of my native King. For your sake I am an exile from my country. I loved you. I trusted myself to you. I had no wish but to end my life in your service. And what was my reward? Stripped of all that you had bestowed on me, the key, the order, the pension, I was forced to fly from your territories. I was haunted as if I had been a deserter from your grenadiers. I was arrested, insulted, plundered. My niece was dragged through the mud of Frankfort by your soldiers, as if she had been some wretched follower of your camp. You have great talents. You have good qualities. But you have one odious vice. You delight in the abasement of your fellow-creatures. You have brought disgrace on the name of philosopher. You have given

some colour to the slanders of the bigots, who say that no confidence can be placed in the justice or humanity of those who reject the Christian faith." Then the King answers, with less heat but equal severity — " You know that you behaved shamefully in Prussia. It was well for you that you had to deal with a man so indulgent to the infirmities of genius as I am. You richly deserved to see the inside of a dungeon. Your talents are not more widely known than your faithlessness and your malevolence. The grave itself is no asylum from your spite. Maupertuis is dead; but you still go on calumniating and deriding him, as if you had not made him miserable enough while he was living. Let us have no more of this. And, above all, let me hear no more of your niece. I am sick to death of her name. I can bear with your faults for the sake of your merits; but she has not written *Mahomet* or *Merope*."

An explosion of this kind, it might be supposed, would necessarily put an end to all amicable communication. But it was not so. After every outbreak of ill humour this extraordinary pair became more loving than before, and exchanged compliments and assurances of mutual regard with a wonderful air of sincerity.

It may well be supposed that men who wrote thus to each other, were not very guarded in what they said of each other. The English ambassador, Mitchell, who knew that the King of Prussia was constantly writing to Voltaire with the greatest freedom on the most important subjects, was amazed to hear his Majesty designate this highly favoured correspondent as a bad-hearted fellow, the greatest rascal on the face of the earth. And the language which the poet held about the King was not much more respectful.

It would probably have puzzled Voltaire himself to say what was his real feeling towards Frederic. It was compounded of all sentiments, from enmity to friendship, and from scorn to admiration; and the proportions in which these elements were mixed, changed every moment. The old patriarch resembled the spoiled child who screams, stamps, cuffs, laughs, kisses, and cuddles within one quarter of an hour. His resentment was not extinguished; yet he was not without sympathy for his old friend. As a Frenchman he wished success to the arms of his country. As a philosopher, he was anxious for the stability of a throne on which a philosopher sat. He longed both to save and to humble Frederic. There was one way, and only one, in which all his conflicting feelings could at once be gratified. If Frederic were preserved by the interference of France, if it were known that for that interference he was indebted to the mediation of Voltaire, this would indeed be delicious revenge; this would indeed be to heap coals of fire on that haughty head. Nor did the vain and restless poet think it impossible that he might, from his hermitage near the Alps, dictate peace to Europe. D'Estrées had quitted Hanover, and the command of the French army had been entrusted to the Duke of Richelieu, a man whose

chief distinction was derived from his success in gallantry. Richelieu was in truth the most eminent of that race of seducers by profession, who furnished Crébillon the younger and La Clos with models for their heroes. In his earlier days the royal house itself had not been secure from his presumptuous love. He was believed to have carried his conquests into the family of Orleans; and some suspected that he was not unconcerned in the mysterious remorse which embittered the last hours of the charming mother of Lewis the Fifteenth. But the Duke was now sixty years old. With a heart deeply corrupted by vice, a head long accustomed to think only on trifles, an impaired constitution, an impaired fortune, and, worst of all, a very red nose, he was entering on a dull, frivolous, and unrespected old age. Without one qualification for military command, except that personal courage which was common between him and the whole nobility of France, he had been placed at the head of the army of Hanover; and in that situation he did his best to repair, by extortion and corruption, the injury which he had done to his property by a life of dissolute profusion.

The Duke of Richelieu to the end of his life hated the philosophers as a sect, not for those parts of their system which a good and wise man would have condemned, but for their virtues, for their spirit of free inquiry, and for their hatred of those social abuses of which he was himself the personification. But he, like many of those who thought with him, excepted Voltaire from the list of proscribed writers. He frequently sent flattering letters to Ferney. He did the patriarch the honour to borrow money of him, and even carried this condescending friendship so far as to forget to pay the interest. Voltaire thought that it might be in his power to bring the Duke and the King of Prussia into communication with each other. He wrote earnestly to both; and he so far succeeded that correspondence between them was commenced.

But it was to very different means that Frederic was to owe his deliverance. At the beginning of November, the net seemed to have closed completely round him. The Russians were in the field, and were spreading devastation through his eastern provinces. Silesia was overrun by the Austrians. A great French army was advancing from the west under the command of Marshal Soubise, a prince of the great Armorican house of Rohan. Berlin itself had been taken and plundered by the Croatsians. Such was the situation from which Frederic extricated himself, with dazzling glory, in the short space of thirty days.

He marched first against Soubise. On the fifth of November the armies met at Rosbach. French were two to one; but they were ill-disciplined, and their general was a dunce. The tactics of Frederic, and the well-regulated valour of the Prussian troops obtained a complete victory. Seven thousand of the invaders were made prisoners. Their guns, their colours, their baggage, fell into the hands of the conquerors. Those who escaped

fled as confusedly as a mob scattered by cavalry. Victorious in the West, the King turned his arms towards Silesia. In that quarter everything seemed to be lost. Breslau had fallen; and Charles of Lorraine, with a mighty power, held the whole province. On the fifth of December, exactly one month after the battle of Rosbach, Frederic, with forty thousand men, and Prince Charles, at the head of not less than sixty thousand, met at Leuthen, hard by Breslau. The King, who was, in general, perhaps too much inclined to consider the common soldier as a mere machine, resorted, on this great day, to means resembling those which Bonaparte afterwards employed with such signal success for the purpose of stimulating military enthusiasm. The principal officers were convoked. Frederic addressed them with great force and pathos; and directed them to speak to their men as he had spoken to them. When the armies were set in battle array, the Prussian troops were in a state of fierce excitement; but their excitement showed itself after the fashion of a grave people. The columns advanced to the attack chanting, to the sound of drums and fifes, the rude hymns of the old Saxon Sternholds. They had never fought so well; nor had the genius of their chief ever been so conspicuous. "That battle," said Napoleon, "was a masterpiece. Of itself it is sufficient to entitle Frederic to a place in the first rang among generals." The victory was complete. Twenty-seven thousand Austrians were killed, wounded, or taken; fifty stand of colours, a hundred guns, four thousand wagons, fell into the hands of the Prussians. Breslau opened its gates; Silesia was reconquered; Charles of Lorraine retired to hide his shame and sorrow at Brussels; and Frederic allowed his troops to take some repose in winter quarters, after a campaign, to the vicissitudes of which it will be difficult to find any parallel in ancient or modern history.

The King's fame filled all the world. He had during the last year, maintained a contest, on terms of advantage, against three powers, the weakest of which had more than three times his resources. He had fought four great pitched battles against superior forces. Three of these battles he had gained: and the defeat of Kolin, repaired as it had been, rather raised than lowered his military renown. The victory of Leuthen is, to this day, the proudest on the roll of Prussian fame. Leipsic indeed, and Waterloo, produced consequences more important to mankind. But the glory of Leipsic must be shared by the Prussians with the Austrians and Russians; and at Waterloo the British infantry bore the burden and heat of the day. The victory of Rosbach was, in a military point of view, less honourable than that of Leuthen; for it was gained over an incapable general, and a disorganized army; but the moral effect which it produced was immense. All the preceding triumphs of Frederic had been triumphs over Germans, and could excite no emotions of national pride among the German people. It was impossible that a Hessian or a Hanoverian could feel any patriotic exaltation at hearing that Pomeranians had slaughtered Moravians, or that

Saxon banners had been hung in the churches of Berlin. Indeed, though the military character of the Germans justly stood high throughout the world, they could boast of no great day which belonged to them as a people; of no Agincourt, of no Bannockburn. Most of their victories had been gained over each other; and their most splendid exploits against foreigners had been achieved under the command of Eugene, who was himself a foreigner. The news of the battle of Rosbach stirred the blood of the whole of the mighty population from the Alps to the Baltic, and from the borders of Courland to those of Lorraine. Westphalia and Lower Saxony had been deluged by a great host of strangers, whose speech was unintelligible, and whose petulant and licentious manners had excited the strongest feelings of disgust and hatred. That great host had been put to flight by a small band of German warriors, led by a prince of German blood on the side of father and mother, and marked by the fair hair and the clear blue eye of Germany. Never since the dissolution of the empire of Charlemagne, had the Teutonic race won such a field against the French. The tidings called forth a general burst of delight and pride from the whole of the great family which spoke the various dialects of the ancient language of Arminius. The fame of Frederic began to supply, in some degree, the place of a common government and of a common capital. It became a rallying point for all true Germans, a subject of mutual congratulation to the Bavarian and the Westphalian, to the citizen of Frankfort, and to the citizen of Nuremberg. Then first it was manifest that the Germans were truly a nation. Then first was discernible that patriotic spirit which, in 1813, achieved the great deliverance of central Europe, and which still guards, and long will guard, against foreign ambition the old freedom of the Rhine.

Nor were the effects produced by that celebrated day merely political. The greatest masters of German poetry and eloquence have admitted that, though the great King neither valued nor understood his native language, though he looked on France as the only seat of taste and philosophy, yet, in his own despite, he did much to emancipate the genius of his countrymen from the foreign yoke; and that, in the act of vanquishing Soubise, he was, unintentionally, rousing the spirit which soon began to question the literary precedence of Boileau and Voltaire. So strangely do events confound all the plans of man. A prince who read only French, who wrote only French, who aspired to rank as a French classic, became, quite unconsciously, the means of liberating half the Continent from the domination of that French criticism of which he was himself, to the end of his life, a slave. Yet even the enthusiasm of Germany in favour of Frederic hardly equalled the enthusiasm of England. The birthday of our ally was celebrated with as much enthusiasm as that of our own sovereign; and at night the streets of London were in a blaze with illuminations. Portraits of the Hero of Rosbach, with his cocked hat and long pigtail, were in every house. An attentive observer will, at this day, find in the parlours of old-fashioned

inns, and in the portfolios of print-sellers, twenty portraits of Frederic for one of George the Second. The sign-painters were everywhere employed in touching up Admiral Vernon into the King of Prussia. This enthusiasm was strong among religious people, and especially among the Methodists, who knew that the French and Austrians were Papists, and supposed Frederic to be the Joshua or Gideon of the Reformed Faith. One of Whitfield's hearers, on the day on which thanks for the battle of Leuthen were returned at the Tabernacle, made the following exquisitely ludicrous entry in a diary, part of which has come down to us: "The Lord stirred up the King of Prussia and his soldiers to pray. They kept three fast days, and spent about an hour praying and singing psalms before they engaged the enemy. O! how good it is to pray and fight!" Some young Englishmen of rank proposed to visit Germany as volunteers, for the purpose of learning the art of war under the greatest of commanders. This last proof of British attachment and admiration, Frederic politely but firmly declined. His camp was no place for amateur students of military science. The Prussian discipline was rigorous even to cruelty. The officers, while in the field, were expected to practice an abstemiousness and self-denial such as was hardly surpassed by the most rigid monastic orders. However noble their birth, however high their rank in the service, they were not permitted to eat from anything better than pewter. It was a high crime even in a count and field-marshal to have a single silver spoon among his baggage. Gay young Englishmen of twenty thousand a year, accustomed to liberty and luxury, would not easily submit to these Spartan restraints. The King could not venture to keep them in order as he kept his own subjects in order. Situated as he was with respect to England, he could not well imprison or shoot refractory Howards and Cavendishes. On the other hand, the example of a few fine gentlemen, attended by chariots and livery servants, eating in plates, and drinking champagne and Tokay, was enough to corrupt his whole army. He thought it best to make a stand at first, and civilly refused to admit such dangerous companions among his troops.

The help of England was bestowed in a manner far more useful and more acceptable. An annual subsidy of near seven hundred thousand pounds enabled the King to add probably more than fifty thousand men to his army. Pitt, now at the height of power and popularity, undertook the task of defending Western Germany against France, and asked Frederic, only for the loan of a general. The general selected was Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, who had attained high distinction in the Prussian service. He was put at the head of an army, partly English, partly Hanoverian, partly composed of mercenaries hired from the petty princes of the empire. He soon vindicated the choice of the two allied Courts, and proved himself the second general of the age.

Frederic passed the winter at Breslau, in reading, writing, and preparing for the next campaign. The havoc which the war had made among

his troops was rapidly repaired; and in the spring of 1758 he was again ready for the conflict. Prince Ferdinand kept the French in check. The King in the meantime, after attempting against the Austrians some operations which led to no very important result, marched to encounter the Russians, who, slaying, burning, and wasting wherever they turned, had penetrated into the heart of his realm. He gave them battle at Zorndorf, near Frankfort on the Oder. The fight was long and bloody. Quarter was neither given nor taken; for the Germans and Scythians regarded each other with bitter aversion, and the sight of the ravages committed by the half savage invaders, had incensed the King and his army. The Russians were overthrown with great slaughter; and for a few months no further danger was to be apprehended from the east.

A day of thanksgiving was proclaimed by the King, and was celebrated with pride and delight by his people. The rejoicings in England were not less enthusiastic or less sincere. This may be selected as the point of time at which the military glory of Frederic reached its zenith. In the short space of three quarters of a year he had won three great battles over the armies of three mighty and warlike monarchies, France, Austria, and Russia.

But it was decreed that the temper of that strong mind should be tried by both extremes of fortune in rapid succession. Close upon this series of triumphs came a series of disasters, such as would have blighted the fame and broken the heart of almost any other commander. Yet Frederic, in the midst of his calamities, was still an object of admiration to his subjects, his allies, and his enemies. Overwhelmed by adversity, sick of life, he still maintained the contest, greater in defeat, in flight, and in what seemed hopeless ruin, than on the fields of his proudest victories.

Having vanquished the Russians, he hastened into Saxony to oppose the troops of the Empress Queen, commanded by Daun, the most cautious, and Laudohn, the most inventive and enterprising of her generals. These two celebrated commanders agreed on a scheme, in which the prudence of one and the vigour of the other seem to have been happily combined. At the dead of night they surprised the king in his camp at Hochkirchen. His presence of mind saved his troops from destruction; but nothing could save them from defeat and severe loss. Marshal Keith was among the slain. The first roar of the guns roused the noble exile from his rest, and he was instantly in the front of the battle. He received a dangerous wound, but refused to quit the field, and was in the act of rallying his broken troops, when an Austrian bullet terminated his chequered and eventful life.

The misfortune was serious. But of all generals Frederic understood best how to repair defeat, and Daun understood least how to improve victory. In a few days the Prussian army was as formidable as before the battle. The prospect was, however, gloomy. An Austrian army under General Harsch had invaded Silesia, and invested the fortress of Neisse. Daun, after his success at Hochkirchen, had written to Harsch in very

confident terms: — “Go on with your operations against Neisse. Be quite at ease as to the King. I will give a good account of him.” In truth, the position of the Prussians was full of difficulties. Between them and Silesia lay the victorious army of Daun. It was not easy for them to reach Silesia at all. If they did reach it, they left Saxony exposed to the Austrians. But the vigour and activity of Frederic surmounted every obstacle. He made a circuitous march of extraordinary rapidity, passed Daun, hastened into Silesia, raised the siege of Niesse, and drove Harsch into Bohemia. Daun availed himself of the King’s absence to attack Dresden. The Prussians defended it desperately. The inhabitants of that wealthy and polished capital begged in vain for mercy from the garrison within, and from the besiegers without. The beautiful suburbs were burned to the ground. It was clear that the town, if won at all, would be won street by street by the bayonet. At this conjuncture came news, that Frederic, having cleared Silesia of his enemies, was returning by forced marches into Saxony. Daun retired from before Dresden, and fell back into the Austrian territories. The King, over heaps of ruins, made his triumphant entry into the unhappy metropolis, which had so cruelly expiated the weak and perfidious policy of its sovereign. It was now the twentieth of November. The cold weather suspended military operations; and the King again took up his winter quarters at Breslau.

The third of the seven terrible years were over; and Frederic still stood his ground. He had been recently tried by domestic as well as by military disasters. On the fourteenth of October, the day on which he was defeated at Hochkirchen, the day on the anniversary of which, forty-eight years later, a defeat far more tremendous laid the Prussian monarchy in the dust, died Wilhelmina, Margravine of Bayreuth. From the accounts which we have of her, by her own hand, and by the hands of the most discerning of her contemporaries, we should pronounce her to have been coarse, indelicate, and a good hater, but not destitute of kind and generous feelings. Her mind, naturally strong and observant, had been highly cultivated; and she was, and deserved to be, Frederic’s favourite sister. He felt the loss as much as it was in his iron nature to feel the loss of anything but a province or a battle.

At Breslau, during the winter, he was indefatigable in his poetical labours. The most spirited lines, perhaps, that he ever wrote, are to be found in a bitter lampoon on Lewis and Madame de Pompadour, which he composed at this time, and sent to Voltaire. The verses were, indeed, so good, that Voltaire was afraid that he might himself be suspected of having written them, or at least of having corrected them; and partly from fright, partly, we fear, from love of mischief, sent them to the Duke of Choiseul, then prime minister of France. Choiseul very wisely determined to encounter Frederic at Frederic’s own weapons, and applied for assistance to Palissot, who had some skill as a versifier, and some little

talent for satire. Palissot produced some very stinging lines on the moral and literary character of Frederic, and these lines the Duke sent to Voltaire. This war of couplets, following close on the carnage of Zorndorf and the conflagration of Dresden, illustrates well the strangely compounded character of the King of Prussia.

At this moment he was assailed by a new enemy. Benedict the Fourteenth, the best and wisest of the two hundred and fifty successors of St. Peter, was no more. During the short interval between his reign and that of his disciple Ganganelli, the chief seat in the Church of Rome was filled by Rezzonico, who took the name of Clement the Thirteenth. This absurd priest determined to try what the weight of his authority could effect in favour of the orthodox Maria Theresa against a heretic king. At the high mass on Christmas-day, a sword with a rich belt and scabbard, a hat of crimson velvet lined with ermine, and a dove of pearls, the mystic symbol of the Divine Comforter, were solemnly blessed by the supreme pontiff, and were sent with great ceremony to Marshal Daun, the conqueror of Kolin and Hochkirchen. This mark of favour had more than once been bestowed by the Popes on the great champions of the faith. Similar honours had been paid, more than six centuries earlier, by Urban the Second to Godfrey of Bouillon. Similar honours had been conferred on Alba for destroying the liberties of the Low Countries, and on John Sobiesky after the deliverance of Vienna. But the presents which were received with profound reverence by the Baron of the Holy Sepulchre in the eleventh century, and which had not wholly lost their value even in the seventeenth century, appeared inexpressibly ridiculous to a generation which read Montesquieu and Voltaire. Frederic wrote sarcastic verses on the gifts, the giver, and the receiver. But the public wanted no prompter; and an universal roar of laughter from Petersburg to Lisbon reminded the Vatican that the age of crusades was over.

The fourth campaign, the most disastrous of all the campaigns of this fearful war, had now opened. The Austrians filled Saxony and menaced Berlin. The Russians defeated the King's generals on the Oder, threatened Silesia, effected a junction with Laudohn, and entrenched themselves strongly at Kunersdorf. Frederic hastened to attack them. A great battle was fought. During the earlier part of the day everything yielded to the impetuosity of the Prussians, and to the skill of their chief. The lines were forced. Half the Russian guns were taken. The King sent off a courier to Berlin with two lines, announcing a complete victory. But, in the meantime, the stubborn Russians, defeated yet unbroken, had taken up their stand in an almost impregnable position, on an eminence where the Jews of Frankfort were wont to bury their dead. Here the battle recommenced. The Prussian infantry, exhausted by six hours of hard fighting under a sun which equalled the tropical heat, were yet brought up repeatedly to the attack, but in vain. The King led three charges in person. Two horses were

killed under him. The officers of his staff fell all round him. His coat was pierced by several bullets. All was in vain. His infantry was driven back with frightful slaughter. Terror began to spread fast from man to man. At that moment, the fiery cavalry of Laudohn, still fresh, rushed on the wavering ranks. Then followed an universal rout. Frederic himself was on the point of falling into the hands of the conquerors, and was with difficulty saved by a gallant officer, who, at the head of a handful of Hussars, made good a diversion of a few minutes. Shattered in body, shattered in mind, the King reached that night a village which the Cossacks had plundered; and there, in a ruined and deserted farmhouse, flung himself on a heap of straw. He had sent to Berlin a second dispatch very different from the first: — "Let the royal family leave Berlin. Send the archives to Potsdam. The town may make terms with the enemy."

The defeat was, in truth, overwhelming. Of fifty thousand men who had that morning marched under the black eagles, not three thousand remained together. The King bethought him again of his corrosive sublimate, and wrote to bid adieu to his friends, and to give directions as to the measures to be taken in the event of his death: — "I have no resource left" — such is the language of one of his letters — "all is lost. I will not survive the ruin of my country. Farewell for ever."

But the mutual jealousies of the confederates prevented them from following up their victory. They lost a few days in loitering and squabbling; and a few days, improved by Frederic, were worth more than the years of other men. On the morning after the battle, he had got together eighteen thousand of his troops. Very soon his force amounted to thirty thousand. Guns were procured from the neighbouring fortresses; and there was again an army. Berlin was for the present safe; but calamities came pouring on the King in uninterrupted succession. One of his generals, with a large body of troops, was taken at Maxen; another was defeated at Meissen; and when at length the campaign of 1759 closed, in the midst of a rigorous winter, the situation of Prussia appeared desperate. The only consoling circumstance was, that, in the West, Ferdinand of Brunswick had been more fortunate than his master; and by a series of exploits, of which the battle of Minden was the most glorious, had removed all apprehension of danger on the side of France.

The fifth year was now about to commence. It seemed impossible that the Prussian territories, repeatedly devastated by hundreds of thousands of invaders, could longer support the contest. But the King carried on war as no European power has ever carried on war, except the Committee of Public Safety during the great agony of the French Revolution. He governed his kingdom as he would have governed a besieged town, not caring to what extent property was destroyed, or the pursuits of civil life suspended, so that he did but make head against the enemy. As long as

there was a man left in Prussia, that man might carry a musket; as long as there was a horse left, that horse might draw artillery. The coin was debased, the civil functionaries were left unpaid; in some provinces civil government altogether ceased to exist. But there was still rye-bread and potatoes; there were still lead and gunpowder; and, while the means of sustaining and destroying life remained, Frederic was determined to fight it out to the very last.

The earlier part of the campaign of 1760 was unfavourable to him. Berlin was again occupied by the enemy. Great contributions were levied on the inhabitants, and the royal palace was plundered. But at length, after two years of calamity, victory came back to his arms. At Lignitz he gained a great battle over Laudohn; at Torgau, after a day of horrible carnage, he triumphed over Daun. The fifth year closed, and still the event was in suspense. In the countries where the war had raged, the misery and exhaustion were more appalling than ever; but still there were left men and beasts, arms and food, and still Frederic fought on. In truth he had now been baited into savageness. His heart was ulcerated with hatred. The implacable resentment with which his enemies persecuted him, though originally provoked by his own unprincipled ambition, excited in him a thirst for vengeance which he did not even attempt to conceal. "It is hard," he says in one of his letters, "for a man to bear what I bear. I begin to feel that, as the Italians say, revenge is a pleasure for the gods. My philosophy is worn out by suffering. I am no saint, like those of whom we read in the legends; and I will own that I should die content if only I could first inflict a portion of the misery which I endure."

Borne up by such feelings, he struggled with various success, but constant glory, through the campaign of 1761. On the whole the result of this campaign was disastrous to Prussia. No great battle was gained by the enemy; but, in spite of the desperate bounds of the hunted tiger, the circle of pursuers was fast closing round him. Laudohn had surprised the important fortress of Schweidnitz. With that fortress half of Silesia, and the command of the most important defiles through the mountains had been transferred to the Austrians. The Russians had overpowered the King's generals in Pomerania. The country was so completely desolated that he began, by his own confession, to look round him with blank despair, unable to imagine where recruits, horses, or provisions were to be found.

Just at this time, two great events brought on a complete change in the relations of almost all the powers of Europe. One of those events was the retirement of Mr. Pitt from office; the other was the death of the Empress Elizabeth of Russia.

The retirement of Pitt seemed to be an omen of utter ruin to the House of Brandenburg. His proud and vehement nature was incapable of anything that looked like either fear or treachery. He had often declared that, while he was in power, England should never make a peace of Utrecht, should

never, for any selfish object, abandon an ally even in the last extremity of distress. The Continental war was his own war. He had been bold enough, he who in former times had attacked, with irresistible powers of oratory, the Hanoverian policy of Carteret, and the German subsidies of Newcastle, to declare that Hanover ought to be as dear to us as Hampshire, and that he would conquer America in Germany. He had fallen; and the power which he had exercised, not always with discretion, but always with vigour and genius, had devolved on a favourite who was the representative of the Tory party, of the party which had thwarted William, which had persecuted Marlborough, which had given up the Catalans to the vengeance of Philip of Anjou. To make peace with France, to shake off, with all, or more than all, the speed compatible with decency, every Continental connexion, these were among the chief objects of the new Minister. The policy then followed inspired Frederic with an unjust, but deep and bitter aversion to the English name, and produced effects which are still felt throughout the civilized world. To that policy it was owing that, some years later, England could not find on the whole Continent a single ally to stand by her, in her extreme need, against the House of Bourbon. To that policy it was owing that Frederic, alienated from England, was compelled to connect himself closely, during his later years, with Russia, and was induced to assist in that great crime, the fruitful parent of other great crimes, the first partition of Poland.

Scarcely had the retreat of Mr. Pitt deprived Prussia of her only friend, when the death of Elizabeth produced an entire revolution in the politics of the North. The Grand Duke Peter, her nephew, who now ascended the Russian throne, was not merely free from the prejudices which his aunt had entertained against Frederic, but was a worshipper, a servile imitator of the great King. The days of the new Czar's government were few and evil, but sufficient to produce a change in the whole state of Christendom. He set the Prussian prisoners at liberty, fitted them out decently, and sent them back to their master; he withdrew his troops from the provinces which Elizabeth had decided on incorporating with her dominions; and he absolved all those Prussian subjects, who had been compelled to swear fealty to Russia, from their engagements.

Not content with concluding peace on terms favourable to Prussia, he solicited rank in the Prussian service, dressed himself in a Prussian uniform, wore the Black Eagle of Prussia on his breast, made preparations for visiting Prussia, in order to have an interview with the object of his idolatry, and actually sent fifteen thousand excellent troops to re-enforce the shattered army of Frederic. Thus strengthened, the King speedily repaired the losses of the preceding year, reconquered Silesia, defeated Daun at Buckersdorf, invested and retook Schweidnitz, and, at the close of the year, presented to the forces of Maria Theresa a front as formidable as before the great reverses of 1759. Before the end of the campaign, his

friend, the Emperor Peter, having, by a series of absurd insults to the institutions, manners, and feelings of his people, united them in hostility to his person and government, was deposed and murdered. The Empress, who, under the title of Catherine the Second, now assumed the supreme power, was, at the commencement of her administration, by no means partial to Frederic, and refused to permit her troops to remain under his command. But she observed the peace made by her husband; and Prussia was no longer threatened by danger from the East.

England and France at the same time paired off together. They concluded a treaty, by which they bound themselves to observe neutrality with respect to the German war. Thus the coalitions on both sides were dissolved; and the original enemies, Austria and Prussia, remained alone confronting each other.

Austria had undoubtedly far greater means than Prussia, and was less exhausted by hostilities; yet it seemed hardly possible that Austria could effect alone what she had in vain attempted to effect when supported by France on the one side, and by Russia on the other. Danger also began to menace the imperial house from another quarter. The Ottoman Porte held threatening language, and a hundred thousand Turks were mustered on the frontiers of Hungary. The proud and revengeful spirit of the Empress Queen at length gave way; and, in February 1763, the peace of Hubertsburg put an end to the conflict which had, during seven years, devastated Germany. The King ceded nothing. The whole Continent in arms had proved unable to tear Silesia from that iron grasp.

The war was over. Frederic was safe. His glory was beyond the reach of envy. If he had not made conquests as vast as those of Alexander, of Cæsar, and of Napoleon, if he had not, on fields of battle, enjoyed the constant success of Marlborough and Wellington, he had yet given an example unrivalled in history of what capacity and resolution can effect against the greatest superiority of power, and the utmost spite of fortune. He entered Berlin in triumph, after an absence of more than six years. The streets were brilliantly lighted up; and, as he passed along in an open carriage, with Ferdinand of Brunswick at his side, the multitude saluted him with loud praises and blessings. He was moved by those marks of attachment, and repeatedly exclaimed "Long live my dear people! Long live my children!" Yet, even in the midst of that gay spectacle, he could not but perceive everywhere the traces of destruction and decay. The city had been more than once plundered. The population had considerably diminished. Berlin, however, had suffered little when compared with most parts of the kingdom. The ruin of private fortunes, the distress of all ranks, was such as might appall the firmest mind. Almost every province had been the seat of war, and of war conducted with merciless ferocity. Clouds of Croats had descended on Silesia. Tens of thousands of Cossacks had been let loose on Pomerania and Brandenburg. The mere contributions

levied by the invaders amounted, it was said, to more than a hundred millions of dollars; and the value of what they extorted was probably much less than the value of what they destroyed. The fields lay uncultivated. The very seed-corn had been devoured in the madness of hunger. Famine, and contagious maladies produced by famine, had swept away the herds and flocks; and there was reason to fear that a great pestilence among the human race was likely to follow in the train of that tremendous war. Near fifteen thousand houses had been burned to the ground. The population of the kingdom had in seven years decreased to the frightful extent of ten per cent. A sixth of the males capable of bearing arms had actually perished on the field of battle. In some districts, no labourers, except women, were seen in the fields at harvest-time. In others, the traveller passed shuddering through a succession of silent villages, in which not a single inhabitant remained. The currency had been debased; the authority of laws and magistrates had been suspended; the whole social system was deranged. For, during that convulsive struggle, everything that was not military violence was anarchy. Even the army was disorganized. Some great generals, and a crowd of excellent officers, had fallen, and it had been impossible to supply their place. The difficulty of finding recruits had, towards the close of the war, been so great, that selection and rejection were impossible. Whole battalions were composed of deserters or of prisoners. It was hardly to be hoped that thirty years of repose and industry would repair the ruin produced by seven years of havoc. One consolatory circumstance, indeed, there was. No debt had been incurred. The burdens of the war had been terrible, almost insupportable; but no arrear was left to embarrass the finances in time of peace.

Here, for the present, we must pause. We have accompanied Frederic to the close of his career as a warrior. Possibly, when these *Memoirs* are completed, we may resume the consideration of his character, and give some account of his domestic and foreign policy, and of his private habits, during the many years of tranquillity which followed the Seven Years' War.



IMMANUEL KANT

1724-1804

By E. A. CHR. WASIANSKI and THOMAS DE QUINCEY ¹ (1785-1859)



I TAKE it for granted that all people of education will acknowledge some interest in the *personal* history of Immanuel Kant, however little their taste or their opportunities may have brought them acquainted with the history of Kant's philosophical opinions. A great man, though in an unpopular path, must always be an object of liberal curiosity. To suppose a reader thoroughly indifferent to Kant, is to suppose him thoroughly un-intellectual; and, therefore, though in reality he should happen *not* to regard Kant with interest, it would still be amongst the fictions of courtesies to presume that he *did*. On this principle I make no apology to any reader. philosophic or not, Goth or Vandal, Hun or Saracen, for detaining him upon a short sketch of Kant's life and domestic habits, drawn from the authentic records of his friends and pupils. It is true that, without any illiberality on the part of the public, the *works* of Kant are not, in this country, regarded with the same interest which has gathered about his *name*; and this may be attributed to three causes — first, to the language in which those works are written; secondly, to the supposed obscurity of the philosophy which they deliver, whether inalienable, or due to Kant's particular mode of expounding it; thirdly, to the unpopularity of *all* speculative philosophy whatsoever, no matter how treated, in a country where the structure and tendency of society impress upon the whole activities of the nation a direction almost exclusively practical. But, what-

¹ Reprinted from De Quincey's *Works*. These Memoirs — *The Last Days of Immanuel Kant* — were written in German by Wasianski (1804), and translated and edited by De Quincey, whose note, after the phrase (p. 945) "It is Wasianski who speaks," reads as follows:

"This notification, however, must not be too rigorously interpreted. Undoubtedly it would be wrong, and of evil example, to distribute and confound the separate responsibilities of men. When the opinions involve important moral distinctions, by all means let every man hang by his own hook, and answer for no more than he has solemnly undertaken for. But, on the other hand, it would be most annoying to the reader, if all the petty recollections of some ten or fourteen men reporting upon Kant were individually to be labelled each with its separate certificate of origin and ownership. *Wasianski loquitur* may be regarded as the running title: but it is not, therefore, to be understood that Wasianski is always responsible for each particular opinion or fact reported, unless where it is liable to doubt or controversy. In that case, the responsibility is cautiously discriminated and restricted."

ever may have been the immediate fortunes of his writings, no man of enlightened curiosity will regard the author himself without something of a profounder interest. Measured by one test of power — viz., by the number of books written directly for or against himself, to say nothing of those which indirectly he has modified — there is no philosophic writer whatsoever, if we except Aristotle, Des Cartes, and Locke, who can pretend to approach Kant in the extent or in the depth of influence which he has exercised over the minds of men. Such being his claims upon our notice, I repeat that it is no more than a reasonable act of respect for the reader, to presume in him so much interest about Kant as will justify this brief memorial sketch of his life and habits.

Immanuel Kant, the second of six children, was born at Königsberg, in Prussia (a city at that time containing about fifty thousand inhabitants), on the 22nd of April, 1724. His parents were people of humble rank, and not rich even for their own station, but able (with some assistance from a near relative, and with a trifle in addition from a gentleman who esteemed them for their piety and domestic virtues) to give their son Immanuel a liberal education. He was sent, when a child, to a charity school; and in the year 1732 was removed to the Royal (or Frederician) Academy. Here he studied the Greek and Latin classics, and formed an intimacy with one of his school-fellows, David Ruhnken (afterwards so well known to scholars under his Latinized name of Ruhnkenius), which lasted until the death of the latter. In 1737, Kant lost his mother, a woman of exalted character, and of intellectual accomplishments beyond her rank, who contributed to the future eminence of her illustrious son by the direction which she impressed upon his youthful thoughts, and by the elevated morals to which she trained him. Kant never spoke of her to the end of his life without the utmost tenderness, or without earnest acknowledgment of his obligations to her maternal care.

In 1740, at Michaelmas, he entered the university of Königsberg. In 1746, when about twenty-two years old, he wrote his first work, upon a question partly mathematical and partly philosophic — viz., the valuation of living forces. The question concerned had been first moved by Leibnitz, in opposition to the Cartesians; a new *law* of valuation, and not merely a new valuation, was insisted on by Leibnitz; and the dispute was supposed to have been here at last and finally settled, after having occupied most of the great European mathematicians for more than half a century. Kant's *Dissertation* was dedicated to the King of Prussia, but never reached him; having, in fact (though printed, I believe), never been published. From this time till 1770, Kant supported himself as a private tutor in different families, or by giving private lectures in Königsberg, especially to military men on the art of fortification. In 1770, he was appointed to the Chair of Mathematics, which he exchanged soon after for that of Logic and metaphysics. On this occasion he delivered an inaugural

disputation (*De Mundi Sensibilis atque Intelligibilis Formâ et Principiis*), which is remarkable for containing the first germs of the Transcendental Philosophy. In 1781, he published his great work, the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, or *Critical Investigation of the Pure Reason*. On February 12, 1804, he died.

There are the great epochs of Kant's life. But his was a life remarkable, not so much for its incidents, as for the purity and philosophic dignity of its daily tenor; and of this the best impression will be obtained from Wasianski's memorials — checked and supported by the collateral testimonies of Jachmann, Rink, Borowski, and others. We see him here struggling with the misery of decaying faculties, and with the pain, depression, and agitation of two different complaints — one affecting his stomach, and the other his head; over all which the benignity and nobility of his nature mount, as if on wings, victoriously to the last. The principal defect of this and all other memoirs of Kant is, that they report too little of his conversation and opinions. And perhaps the reader will be disposed to complain, that some of the notices are too minute and circumstantial, so as to be at one time undignified, and at another unfeeling. With respect to the first objection, it may be answered, that biographical gossip of this sort, and ungentlemanly scrutiny into a man's private life, though not what a man of honour would allow himself to write, may be read without blame; and, where a great man is the subject, sometimes with advantage. As to the other objection, I should hardly know how to excuse Mr. Wasianski for kneeling at the bedside of his dying friend, in order to record, with the accuracy of a shorthand reporter, the last flutter of Kant's pulse, and the struggles of nature labouring in extremity, except by supposing that his idealized conception of Kant, as of one belonging to all ages, seemed in *his* mind to transcend and swallow up the ordinary restraints of human sensibility; and that, under this impression, he gave *that* to his sense of a public duty which, it may be hoped, he would willingly have declined on the impulse of his private affections. Now let us begin, premising that for the most part it is Wasianski who speaks:

My knowledge of Professor Kant began long before the period to which this little memorial of him chiefly refers. In the year 1773 or 1774, I cannot exactly say which, I attended his lectures. Afterwards I acted as his amanuensis; and in that office was naturally brought into a closer connexion with him than any other of the students; so that, without any request on my part, he granted me a general privilege of free access to his class-room. In 1780 I took orders, and withdrew myself from all connexion with the university. I still continued, however, to reside in Königsberg; but wholly forgotten, or at any rate wholly unnoticed, by Kant. Ten years later (that is to say, in 1790), I met him by accident at a gay festal party; in fact it was a wedding party, and the wedding was that of

a Königsberg professor. At table, Kant distributed his conversation and attentions pretty generally; but after the entertainment, when the company had dispersed into separate groups, he came and seated himself obligingly by my side. At that time I was a florist — an amateur, I mean, from the passion I had for flowers; upon learning which, he talked of my favourite pursuit, and with very extensive information. In the course of our conversation, I was surprised to find that he was perfectly acquainted with all the circumstances of my situation. He reminded me of our previous connexion; expressed his satisfaction at finding that I was happy; and was so good as to desire that, if my engagements allowed me, I would now and then come and dine with him. Soon after this, he rose to take his leave; and, as our roads lay in the same direction, he proposed to me that I should accompany him home. I did so; and then received an invitation for the next week, with a general invitation for every week after, and permission to name my own day. At first I found it difficult to account for the distinction with which Kant had treated me; and I conjectured that some obliging friend might have spoken of me, in his hearing, somewhat more advantageously than belonged to my humble pretensions; but more intimate experience has convinced me, that he was in the habit of making continual enquiries after the welfare of his former pupils, and was heartily rejoiced to hear of their prosperity. So that it appeared I was wrong in thinking that he had forgotten me.

This revival of my intimacy with Kant coincided pretty nearly, in point of time, with a complete change in his own domestic arrangements. Up to this period it had been his custom to dine at a *table d'hôte*. But he now began to keep house himself; and every day invited a few friends to dine with him, so as to fix the party (himself included) at three for the lower extreme, and at nine for the upper, and upon any little festival from five to eight. He was, in fact, a punctual observer of Lord Chesterfield's rule — that his dinner party, himself included, should not fall below the number of the Graces, nor exceed that of the Muses. In the whole economy of his household arrangements, and especially of his dinner-parties, there was something peculiar, and amusingly opposed to the conventional usage of society; not, however, that there was any neglect of decorum, such as sometimes occurs in houses where there are no ladies to impress a better tone upon the manners. The routine, which under no circumstances either varied or relaxed, was this: no sooner was dinner ready, than Lampe, the professor's old footman, stepped into the study with a certain measured air, and announced it. This summons was obeyed at a pace of double-quick time — Kant talking all the way to the eating-room about the state of the weather, a subject which he usually pursued during the earlier part of the dinner. Graver themes, such as the political events of the day, were never introduced before dinner, or at all in his study. The moment that Kant had taken his seat and unfolded his napkin, he opened the business

of the hour with a particular formula — "Now then, gentlemen!" The words are nothing; but the tone and air with which he uttered them proclaimed, in a way that nobody could mistake, relaxation from the toils of the morning, and determinate abandonment of himself to social enjoyment. The table was hospitably spread; a sufficient choice of dishes there was to meet the variety of tastes; and the decanters of wine were placed, not on a distant sideboard, or under the odious control of a servant (first cousin to the Barmecides), but anacreontically on the table, and at the elbow of every guest. Every person helped himself; and all delays, from too elaborate a spirit of ceremony, were so disagreeable to Kant, that he seldom failed to express his displeasure with anything of that sort, though not angrily. For this hatred of delay Kant had a special excuse, having always worked hard from an early hour in the morning, and eaten nothing until dinner. Hence it was that in the latter period of his life, though less perhaps from actual hunger than from some uneasy sensation of habit or periodical irritation of stomach, he could hardly wait with patience for the arrival of the last person invited.

There was no friend of Kant's but considered the day on which he was to dine with him as a day of festal pleasure. Without giving himself the air of an instructor, Kant really was such in the very highest degree. The whole entertainment was seasoned with the overflow of his enlightened mind, poured out naturally and unaffectedly upon every topic, as the chances of conversation suggested it; and the time flew rapidly away, from one o'clock to four, five or even later, profitably and delightfully. Kant tolerated no lulls, which was the name he gave to the momentary pauses in conversation, when its animation languished. Some means or other he always devised for rekindling its tone of interest; and in this he was much assisted by the tact with which he drew from every guest his peculiar tastes, or the particular direction of his pursuits; and on these, be they what they might, he was never unprepared to speak with knowledge, and with the interest of an original observer. The local affairs of Königsberg must have been interesting indeed before they could be allowed to usurp attention at *his* table. And what may seem still more singular, it was rarely or never that he directed the conversation to any branch of the philosophy founded by himself. Indeed he was perfectly free from the fault which besets so many *savans* and *litterati*, of intolerance towards those whose pursuits might happen to have disqualified them for any special sympathy with his own. His style of conversation was popular in the highest degree, and unscholastic; so much so, that any stranger acquainted with his works, but not with his person, would have found it difficult to believe, that in this delightful and genial companion he saw the profound author of the Transcendental Philosophy.

The subjects of conversation at Kant's table were drawn chiefly from natural philosophy, chemistry, meteorology, natural history, and, above all,

from politics. The news of the day, as reported in the newspapers, was discussed with a peculiar vigilance of examination. With regard to any narrative that wanted dates of time and place, plausible as it might otherwise seem, he was uniformly an inexorable sceptic, and held it unworthy of repetition. So keen was his penetration into the interior of political events, and the secret policy under which they moved, that he talked rather with the authority of a diplomatic person who had access to cabinet intelligence, than as a simple spectator of the great scenes which were in those days unfolding throughout Europe. At the time of the French Revolution, he threw out many conjectures, and what then passed for paradoxical anticipations, especially in regard to military operations, which were as punctually fulfilled as his own memorable conjecture in regard to the hiatus in the planetary system between Mars and Jupiter, the entire confirmation of which he lived to witness on the discovery of Ceres by Piazzi, and of Pallas by Dr. Olbers. These two discoveries, by the way, impressed him much; and they furnished a topic on which he always talked with pleasure; though, according to his usual modesty, he never said a word of his own sagacity in having upon *à priori* grounds shown the probability of such discoveries many years before.

It was not only in the character of a companion that Kant shone, but also as a courteous and liberal host, who had no greater pleasure than in seeing his guests happy and jovial, and rising with exhilarated spirits from the mixed pleasures — intellectual and liberally sensual — of his Platonic banquets. Chiefly, perhaps, with a view to the sustaining of genial hilarity, he showed himself somewhat of an artist in the composition of his dinner-parties. Two rules there were which he obviously observed, and I may say invariably: the first was, that the company should be miscellaneous; this for the sake of securing sufficient variety to the conversation: and accordingly his parties presented as much variety as the world of Königsberg afforded, being drawn from all varieties of life — men in office, professors, physicians, clergymen, and enlightened merchants. His second rule was, to have a due balance of *young* men, frequently of *very* young men, selected from the students of the university, in order to impress a movement of gaiety and juvenile playfulness on the conversation; an additional motive for which, as I have reason to believe, was, that in this way he withdrew his mind from the sadness which sometimes overshadowed it, for the early deaths of some young friends whom he loved.

And this leads me to mention a singular feature in Kant's way of expressing his sympathy with his friends in sickness. So long as the danger was imminent, he testified a restless anxiety, made perpetual enquiries, waited with impatience for the crisis, and sometimes could not pursue his customary labours from agitation of mind. But no sooner was the patient's death announced than he recovered his composure, and assumed an air of stern tranquillity — almost of indifference. The reason was, that he

viewed life in general, and therefore that particular affection of life which we call sickness, as a state of oscillation and perpetual change, between which and the fluctuating sympathies of hope and fear, there was a natural proportion that justified them to the reason; whereas death as a permanent state that admitted of no *more* and no *less*, that terminated all anxiety, and forever extinguished the agitations of suspense — he regarded as not adapted to any state of feeling, but one of the same enduring and unchanging character. However, all this philosophic heroism gave way on one occasion; for many persons will remember the tumultuous grief which he manifested upon the death of Mr. Ehrenboth, a young man of very fine understanding and extensive attainments, for whom he had the greatest affection. And naturally it happened, in so long a life as his, in spite of his provident rule for selecting his social companions as much as possible amongst the young, that he had to mourn for many a heavy loss that could never be supplied to him.

To return, however, to the course of his day, immediately after the termination of his dinner-party, Kant walked out for exercise; but on this occasion he never took any companion; partly, perhaps, because he thought it right, after so much convivial and colloquial relaxation, to pursue his meditations, and partly (as I happen to know) for this very peculiar reason — that he wished to breathe exclusively through his nostrils, which he could not do, if he were obliged continually to open his mouth in conversation. His reason for this wish was, that the atmospheric air, being thus carried round by a longer circuit, and reaching the lungs, therefore, in a state of less rawness, and at a temperature somewhat higher, would be less apt to irritate them. By a steady perseverance in this practice, which he constantly recommended to his friends, he flattered himself with a long immunity from coughs, hoarsenesses, catarrhs, and all modes of pulmonary derangement; and the fact really was, that these troublesome affections attacked him very rarely. Indeed, I myself, by only occasionally adopting this rule, have found my chest not so liable as formerly to such attacks.

On returning from his walk, he sat down to his library table, and read till dusk. During this period of dubious light, so friendly to thought, he rested in tranquil meditation on what he had been reading, provided the book were worth it; if not, he sketched his lecture for the next day, or some part of any book he might then be composing. During this state of repose, he took his station winter and summer by the stove, looking through the window at the old tower of Löbenicht; not that he could be said properly to see it, but the tower rested upon his eye as distant music on the ear — obscurely, or but half revealed to the consciousness. No words seem forcible enough to express his sense of the gratification which he derived from this old tower, when seen under these circumstances of twilight and quiet reverie. The sequel, indeed, showed how important it had become to his comfort; for at length some poplars in a neighbouring garden shot up to

such a height as to obscure the tower, upon which Kant became very uneasy and restless, and at length found himself positively unable to pursue his evening meditations. Fortunately, the proprietor of the garden was a very considerate and obliging person, who had, besides, a high regard for Kant; and, accordingly, upon a representation of the case being made to him, he gave orders that the poplars should be cropped. This was done; the old tower of Löbenicht was again exposed; Kant recovered his equanimity, and once more found himself able to pursue his twilight meditations in peace.

After the candles were brought, Kant prosecuted his studies till nearly ten o'clock. A quarter of an hour before retiring for the night, he withdrew his mind as much as possible from every class of thoughts which demanded any exertion or energy of attention, on the principle, that by stimulating and exciting him too much, such thoughts would be apt to cause wakefulness; and the slightest interference with his customary hour of falling asleep was in the highest degree unpleasant to him. Happily, this was with him a very rare occurrence. He undressed himself without his servant's assistance; but in such an order, and with such a Roman regard to decorum and the *τὸ πρέπον*, that he was always ready at a moment's warning to make his appearance without embarrassment to himself or to others. This done, he lay down on a mattress, and wrapped himself up in a quilt, which in summer was always of cotton; in autumn, of wool; at the setting-in of winter, he used both; and, against very severe cold, he protected himself by one of eider-down, of which the part which covered his shoulders was not stuffed with feathers, but padded, or rather wadded closely with layers of wool. Long practice had taught him a very dexterous mode of *nesting* and enswathing himself in the bed-clothes. First of all, he sat down on the bed-side; then with an agile motion he vaulted obliquely into his lair; next he drew one corner of the bed-clothes under his left shoulder, and, passing it below his back brought it round so as to rest under his right shoulder; fourthly, by a particular *tour d'adresse*, he operated on the other corner in the same way; and finally contrived to roll it round his whole person. Thus swathed like a mummy, or (as I used to tell him) self-involved like a silk-worm in its cocoon, he awaited the approach of sleep, which generally came on immediately. For Kant's health was exquisite; not mere negative health, or the absence of pain, and of irritation, and also of *mal-aise* (either of which, though not "pain," is often worse to bear), but a state of positive pleasurable sensation, and a conscious possession of all his vital activities. Accordingly, when packed up for the night in the way I have described, he would often ejaculate to himself (as he used to tell us at dinner) — "Is it possible to conceive a human being with more perfect health than myself?" In fact, such was the purity of his life, and such the happy condition of his situation, that no uneasy passion ever arose to excite him, nor care to harass, nor pain to awake him. Even in the severest winter, his sleeping-room was without

a fire; only in his latter years he yielded so far to the entreaties of his friends as to allow of a very small one. All nursing or self-indulgence found no quarter with Kant. In fact, five minutes, in the coldest weather, sufficed to supersede the first chill of the bed, by the diffusion of a general glow over his person. If he had any occasion to leave his room in the night-time (for it was always kept dark day and night, summer and winter), he guided himself by a rope, which was duly attached to his bedpost every night, and carried into the adjoining apartment.

Kant never perspired, night or day. Yet it was astonishing how much heat he supported habitually in his study, and, in fact, was not easy if it wanted but one degree of this heat. Seventy-five degrees of Fahrenheit was the invariable temperature of this room in which he chiefly lived; and if it fell below that point, no matter at what season of the year, he had it raised artificially to the usual standard. In the heats of summer he went thinly dressed, and invariably in silk stockings; yet, as even this dress could not always secure him against perspiring when engaged in active exercise, he had a singular remedy in reserve. Retiring to some shady place, he stood still and motionless — with the air and attitude of a person listening, or in suspense — until his usual *aridity* was restored. Even in the most sultry summer night, if the slightest trace of perspiration had sullied his night-dress, he spoke of it with emphasis, as of an accident that perfectly shocked him.

On this occasion, whilst illustrating Kant's notions of the animal economy, it may be as well to add one other particular, which is, that, for fear of obstructing the circulation of the blood, he never would wear garters; yet, as he found it difficult to keep up his stockings without them, he had invented for himself a most elaborate substitute, which I will describe. In a little pocket, somewhat smaller than a watch-pocket, but occupying pretty nearly the same situation as a watch-pocket on each thigh, there was placed a small box, something like a watch-case, but smaller; into this box was introduced a watch-spring in a wheel, round about which wheel was wound an elastic cord, for regulating the force of which there was a separate contrivance. To the two ends of this cord were attached hooks, which hooks were carried through a small aperture in the pockets, and so, passing down the inner and the outer side of the thigh, caught hold of two loops which were fixed on the off side and the near side of each stocking. As might be expected, so complex an apparatus was liable, like the Ptolemaic system of the heavens, to occasional derangements; however, by good luck, I was able to apply an easy remedy to these disorders, which otherwise threatened to disturb the comfort, and even the serenity, of the great man.

Precisely at five minutes before five o'clock, winter and summer, Lampe, Kant's footman, who had formerly served in the army, marched into his master's room with the air of a sentinel on duty, and cried aloud, in a mili-

tary tone, "Mr. Professor, the time is come." This summons Kant invariably obeyed without one moment's delay, as a soldier does the word of command — never, under any circumstances, allowing himself a respite, not even under the rare accident of having passed a sleepless night. As the clock struck five, Kant was seated at the breakfast-table, where he drank what he called *one* cup of tea; and no doubt he thought it such; but the fact was, in part from his habit of reverie, and in part also for the purpose of refreshing its warmth, he filled up his cup so often, that in general he is supposed to have drunk two, three, or some unknown number. Immediately after, he smoked a pipe of tobacco (the only one which he allowed himself through the entire day), but so rapidly, that a pile of reliques partially aglow remained unsmoked. During this operation he thought over his arrangements for the day, as he had done the evening before during twilight. About seven he usually went to his lecture-room, and from that he returned to his writing-table. Precisely at three-quarters before one, he arose from his chair, and called aloud to the cook, "It has struck three-quarters." The meaning of which summons was this: — At dinner, and immediately after taking soup, it was his constant practice to swallow what he called a dram, which consisted either of Hungarian wine, of Rhenish, of a cordial, or (in default of these) of the English compound called *Bishop*. A flask or a jug of this was brought up by the cook on the proclamation of the three-quarters. Kant hurried with it to the dining-room, poured out his *quantum*, left it standing in readiness (covered, however, with paper, to prevent its becoming vapid), and then went back to his study, where he awaited the arrival of his guests, whom to the latest period of his life he never received otherwise than in full dress.

Thus we come round again to dinner, and the reader has now an accurate picture of Kant's day, according to the usual succession of its changes. To *him* the monotony of this succession was not burdensome, and probably contributed, with the uniformity of his diet, and other habits of the same regularity, to lengthen his life. On this consideration, indeed, he had come to regard his health and his old age as in a great measure the product of his own exertions. He spoke of himself often under the figure of a gymnastic artist, who had continued for nearly fourscore years to support his balance upon the tight-rope of life, without once swerving to the right or to the left. And certainly, in spite of every illness to which his constitutional tendencies had exposed him, he still kept his position in life triumphantly.

This anxious attention to his health accounts for the great interest which he attached to all new discoveries in medicine, or to new ways of theorizing on the old ones. As a work of great pretension in both classes, he set the highest value upon the theory of the Scotch physician, Brown, or (as it is usually called, from the Latinized name of its author) the Brunonian Theory. No sooner had Weikard adopted and popularized it in

Germany, than Kant became familiar with its details. He considered it not only as a great step taken for medicine, but even for the general interests of man, and fancied that in this he saw something analogous to the course which human nature has held in still more important enquiries — viz.: first of all, a continual ascent towards the more and more elaborately complex, and then a treading back, on its own steps, towards the simple and elementary. Dr. Beddoes' Essays, also, for producing by art and for curing pulmonary consumption, and the method of Reich for curing fevers, made a powerful impression upon him; which, however, declined as those novelties (especially the last) began to sink in credit. As to Dr. Jenner's discovery of vaccination, he was less favourably disposed to it; he apprehended dangerous consequences from the absorption of a brutal miasma into the human blood, or at least into the lymph; and at any rate he thought that, as a guarantee against the variolous infection, it required a much longer probation. Groundless as all these views were, it was exceedingly entertaining to hear the fertility of argument and analogy which he brought forward to support them. One of the subjects which occupied him at the latter end of his life, was the theory and phenomena of galvanism, which, however, he never satisfactorily mastered. Augustin's book upon this subject was about the last that he read, and his copy still retains on the margin his pencil-marks of doubts, queries, and suggestions.

The infirmities of age now began to steal upon Kant, and betrayed themselves in more shapes than one. Connected with Kant's prodigious memory for all things having any intellectual bearings, he had from youth laboured under an unusual weakness of this faculty in relation to the common affairs of daily life. Some remarkable instances of this are on record from the period of his childish days; and now, when his second childhood was commencing, this infirmity increased upon him very sensibly. One of the first signs was, that he began to repeat the same stories more than once on the same day. Indeed, the decay of his memory was too palpable to escape his own notice; and, in order to provide against it, and to secure himself from all apprehension of inflicting tedium upon his guests, he began to write a syllabus, or list of themes, for each day's conversation, on cards, or the covers of letters, or any chance scrap of paper. But these memoranda accumulated so fast upon him, and were so easily lost, or not forthcoming at the proper moment, that I prevailed on him to substitute a blank-paper book, which still remains, and exhibits some affecting memorials of his own conscious weakness. As often happens, however, in such cases, he had a perfect memory for the remote events of his life, and could repeat with great readiness very long passages from German or Latin poems, especially from the *Æneid*, whilst the very words that had been uttered but a moment before dropped away from his remembrance. The past came forward with the distinctness and liveli-

ness of an immediate existence, whilst the present faded away into the obscurity of infinite distance.

Another sign of his mental decay was the weakness with which he now began to theorize. He accounted for everything by electricity. A singular mortality at this time prevailed amongst the cats of Vienna, Basle, Copenhagen, and other places widely remote. Cats being so eminently an electric animal, of course he attributed this epizootic to electricity. During the same period he persuaded himself that a peculiar configuration of clouds prevailed; this he took as a collateral proof of his electrical hypothesis. His own headaches, too, which in all probability were a mere remote effect of old age, and a direct one of an inability to think as easily and as severely as formerly, he explained upon the same principle. And this was a notion of which his friends were not anxious to disabuse him; because, as something of the same character of weather (and therefore probably the same general distribution of the electric power) is found to prevail for whole cycles of years, entrance upon another cycle held out to him some prospect of relief. A delusion, which secured the comforts of hope, was the next best thing to an actual system of relief; and a man who, in such circumstances, is cured of his delusion, "*cui demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error*," might reasonably have exclaimed, "*Pol, me occidistis, amici*."

Possibly the reader may suppose that, in this particular instance of charging his own decays upon the state of the atmosphere, Kant was actuated by the weakness of vanity, or some unwillingness to face the real fact that his powers were decaying. But this was not the case. He was perfectly aware of his own condition; and, as early as 1799, he said, in my presence, to a party of his friends, "Gentlemen, I am old, and weak, and childish, and you must treat me as a child." Or perhaps it may be thought that he shrank from the contemplation of death, which, as apoplexy seemed to be threatened by the pains in his head, might have happened any day. But neither was this the case. He now lived in a continual state of resignation, and prepared for any decree whatever of Providence. "Gentlemen," said he one day to his guests, "I do not fear to die. I assure you, as in the presence of God, that if, on this very night, suddenly the summons to death were to reach me, I should hear it with calmness, should raise my hands to heaven, and say, Blessed be God! Were it indeed possible that a whisper such as this could reach my ear — Fourscore years thou hast lived, in which time thou hast inflicted much evil upon thy fellow-men, the case would be otherwise." Whosoever has heard Kant speak of his own death, will bear witness to the tone of earnest sincerity which, on such occasions, marked his manner and gestures.

A third sign of his decaying faculties was, that he now lost all accurate measure of time. One minute, nay, without exaggeration, a much less space of time, stretched out in his apprehension of things to a wearisome

duration. Of this I can give one rather amusing instance, which was of constant recurrence. At the beginning of the last year of his life, he fell into a custom of taking, immediately after dinner, a cup of coffee, especially on those days when it happened that I was of his party. And such was the importance he attached to this little pleasure, that he would even make a memorandum beforehand, in the blank-paper book I had given him, that on the next day I was to dine with him, and consequently that there was to be coffee. Sometimes it would happen that the interest of conversation carried him past the time at which he felt the craving for it; and this I was not sorry to observe, as I feared that coffee, which he had never been accustomed to, might disturb his rest at night. But, if this did not happen, then commenced a scene of some interest. Coffee must be brought "upon the spot" (a word he had constantly in his mouth during his latter days) "in a moment." And the expressions of his impatience, though from old habit still gentle, were so lively, and had so much of infantine naïveté about them, that none of us could forbear smiling. Knowing what would happen, I had taken care that all the preparations should be made beforehand: the coffee was ground; the water was boiling; and the very moment the word was given, his servant shot in like an arrow, and plunged the coffee into the water. All that remained, therefore, was to give it time to boil up. But this trifling delay seemed unendurable to Kant. All consolations were thrown away upon him: vary the formula as we might, he was never at a loss for a reply. If it was said, "Dear professor, the coffee will be brought up in a moment."—"Will be!" he would say, "but there's the rub, that it only *will* be:

'Man never is, but always to be blest.'"

If another cried out, "The coffee is coming immediately," "Yes," he would retort, "and so is the next hour: and, by the way, it's about that length of time that I have waited for it." Then he would collect himself with a stoical air, and say, "Well, one can die after all: it is but dying; and in the next world, thank God! there is no drinking of coffee, and consequently no waiting for it." Sometimes he would rise from his chair, open the door, and cry out, with a feeble querulousness, as if appealing to the last arrears of humanity amongst his fellow-creatures, "Coffee! coffee!" And when at length he heard the servant's steps upon the stairs, he would turn round to us, and, as joyfully as ever sailor from the mast-head, he would call out, "Land, land! my dear friends, I see land."

This general decline in Kant's powers, active and passive, gradually brought about a revolution in his habits of life. Hitherto, as I have already mentioned, he went to bed at ten, and rose a little before five. The latter practice he still observed, but not the other. In 1802 he retired as early as nine, and afterwards still earlier. He found himself so much refreshed by this addition to his rest, that at first he was disposed to utter a

ἐυρηκα, as over some great discovery in the art of restoring exhausted nature: but afterwards, on pushing it still farther, he did not find the success answer his expectations. His walks he now limited to a few turns in the king's gardens, which were at no great distance from his own house. In order to walk more firmly, he adopted a peculiar method of stepping: he carried his foot to the ground, not forward, and obliquely, but perpendicularly, and with a kind of stamp, so as to secure a larger basis, by setting down the entire sole at once. Notwithstanding this precaution, upon one occasion he fell in the street. He was quite unable to raise himself; and two young ladies, who saw the accident, ran to his assistance. With his usual graciousness of manner he thanked them fervently for their assistance, and presented one of them with a rose which he happened to have in his hand. This lady was not personally known to Kant; but she was greatly delighted with his little present, and still keeps the rose as a frail memorial of her transitory interview with the great philosopher.

This accident, as I have reason to think, was the cause of his henceforth renouncing exercise altogether. All labours, even that of reading, were now performed slowly and with manifest effort; and those which cost him any considerable bodily exertion became very exhausting. His feet refused to do their office more and more; he fell continually, both when moving across the room, and even when standing still; yet he seldom suffered from these falls; and he constantly laughed at them, maintaining that it was impossible he could hurt himself, from the extreme lightness of his person, which was indeed by this time the merest shadow of a man. Very often, especially in the morning, he dropped asleep in his chair from pure weariness and exhaustion: on these occasions he was apt to fall upon the floor, from which he was unable to raise himself up, until accident brought one of his servants or his friends into the room. Afterwards these falls were prevented by substituting a chair with circular supports, that met and clasped in front.

These unseasonable dozings exposed him to another danger. He fell repeatedly, whilst reading, with his head into the candles; a cotton night-cap which he wore was instantly in a blaze, and flaming about his head. Whenever this happened, Kant behaved with great presence of mind. Disregarding the pain, he seized the blazing cap, drew it from his head, laid it quietly on the floor, and trod out the flames with his feet. Yet, as this last act brought his dressing-gown into a dangerous neighbourhood to the flames, I changed the form of his cap, persuaded him to arrange the candles differently, and had a large vase of water placed constantly by his side; and in this way I applied a remedy to a danger which would else probably have proved fatal to him.

From the sallies of impatience which I have described in the case of the coffee, there was reason to fear that, with the increasing infirmities

of Kant, would grow up a general waywardness and obstinacy of temper. For my own sake, therefore, and not less for his, I now laid down one rule for my future conduct in his house: which was, that I would, on no occasion, allow my reverence for him to interfere with the firmest expression of what seemed the just opinion on subjects relating to his own health; and, in cases of great importance, that I would make no compromise with his particular humours, but insist, not only on my view of the case, but also on the practical adoption of my views; or, if this were refused to me, that I would take my departure at once, and not be made responsible for the comfort of a person whom I had no power to influence. And this behaviour on my part it was that won Kant's confidence; for there was nothing which disgusted him so much as any approach to sycophancy or to compliances of timidity. As his imbecility increased, he became daily more liable to mental delusions; and, in particular, he fell into many fantastic notions about the conduct of his servants, and, consequently, sometimes into a peevish mode of treating them. Upon these occasions I generally observed a deep silence. But now and then he would ask me for my opinion; and when this happened, I did not scruple to say, "Ingenuously, then, Mr. Professor, I think that you are in the wrong." — "You think so?" he would reply calmly, at the same time asking for my reasons, which he would listen to with great patience and candour. Indeed, it was evident that the firmest opposition, so long as it rested upon assignable grounds and principles, won upon his regard; whilst his own nobleness of character still moved him to habitual contempt for timorous and partial acquiescence in his opinions, even when his infirmities made him most anxious for such acquiescence.

Earlier in life Kant had been little used to contradiction. His superb understanding, his brilliancy in conversation, founded in part upon his ready and sometimes rather caustic wit, and in part upon his prodigious command of knowledge — the air of noble self-confidence which the consciousness of these advantages impressed upon his manners — and the general acquaintance with the severe purity of his life — all combined to give him a station of superiority to others, which generally secured him from open contradiction. And if it sometimes happened that he met a noisy and intemperate opposition, supported by any pretences to wit, he usually withdrew himself calmly from that sort of unprofitable altercation, by contriving to give such a turn to the conversation as won the general favour of the company to himself, and impressed silence, or modesty at least, upon the boldest disputant. From a person so little familiar with opposition, it could scarcely have been anticipated that he should daily surrender his wishes to mine, if not without discussion, yet always without displeasure. So, however, it was. No habit, of whatever long standing, could be objected to as injurious to his health, but he would generally renounce it. And he had this excellent custom in such cases, that either he

would resolutely and at once decide for his own opinion, or, if he professed to follow his friend's, he would follow it sincerely, and not try it unfairly, by trying it imperfectly. Any plan, however trifling, which he had once consented to adopt on the suggestion of another, was never afterwards defeated or embarrassed by unseasonable interposition from his own humours. And thus, the very period of his decay drew forth so many fresh expressions of his character, in its amiable or noble features, as daily increased my affection and reverence for his person.

Having mentioned his servants, I shall here take occasion to give some account of his man-servant Lampe. It was a great misfortune for Kant, in his old age and infirmities, that this man also became old, and subject to a different sort of infirmities. This Lampe had originally served in the Prussian army; on quitting which he entered the service of Kant. In this situation he had lived about forty years; and, though always dull and stupid, had, in the early part of this period, discharged his duties with tolerable fidelity. But latterly, presuming upon his own indispensableness, from his perfect knowledge of all the domestic arrangements, and up his master's weakness, he had fallen into great irregularities and habitual neglects. Kant had been obliged, therefore, of late to threaten repeatedly that he would discharge him. I, who knew that Kant, though one of the kindest-hearted men, was also one of the firmest, foresaw that this discharge, once given, would be irrevocable: for the word of Kant was as sacred as other men's oaths. Consequently, upon every opportunity I remonstrated with Lampe on the folly of his conduct; and his wife joined me on these occasions. Indeed, it was high time that a change should be made in some quarter; for it now became dangerous to leave Kant, who was constantly falling from weakness, to the care of an old ruffian, who was himself apt to fall from intoxication. The fact was, that from the moment I undertook the management of Kant's affairs, Lampe saw there was an end to his old system of abusing his master's confidence in pecuniary affairs, and to all the other advantages which he took of his helpless situation. This made him desperate, and he behaved worse and worse; until one morning, in January, 1802, Kant told me, that humiliating as he felt such a confession, the fact was, that Lampe had just treated him in a way which he was ashamed to repeat. I was too much shocked to distress him by enquiring into the particulars. But the result was, that Kant now insisted, temperately but firmly, on Lampe's dismissal. Accordingly, a new servant, named Kaufmann, was immediately engaged; and on the following day Lampe was discharged, with a handsome pension for life.

Here I must mention a little circumstance which does honour to Kant's benevolence. In his last will, on the assumption that Lampe would continue with him to his death, he had made a very liberal provision for him; but upon this new arrangement of the pension, which was to take effect

immediately, it became necessary to revoke that part of his will, which he did in a separate codicil, that began thus: — “In consequence of the misbehaviour of my servant Lampe, I think fit,” etc. But soon after, considering that such a solemn and deliberate record of Lampe’s misconduct might be seriously injurious to his interests, he cancelled the passage, and expressed it in such a way, that no trace remained behind of his just displeasure. And his benign nature was gratified with knowing that, this one sentence being blotted out, there remained no other in all his numerous writings, published or confidential, which spoke the language of anger, or could leave any ground for doubting that he died in charity with all the world. Upon Lampe’s calling to demand a written character, he was, however, a good deal embarrassed; Kant’s well-known reverence for truth so stern and inexorable being, in this instance, armed against the first impulses of his kindness. Long and anxiously he sat, with the certificate lying before him, debating how he should fill up the blanks. I was present; but in such a matter I did not presume to suggest any advice. At last he took his pen, and filled up the blank as follows: — “—— has served me long and faithfully” — (for Kant was not aware that he had robbed him) — “but did not display those particular qualifications which fitted him for waiting on an old and infirm man like myself.”

This scene of disturbance over, which to Kant, a lover of peace and tranquillity, caused a shock that gladly he would have been spared, it was fortunate that no other of that nature occurred during the rest of his life. Kaufmann, the successor of Lampe, turned out to be a respectable and upright man, and soon conceived a great attachment to his master. Henceforth things wore a new face in Kant’s family: by the removal of one of the belligerents, peace was once more restored amongst his servants; for hitherto there had been eternal wars between Lampe and the cook. Sometimes it was Lampe that carried a war of aggression into the cook’s territory of the kitchen; sometimes it was the cook that revenged these insults, by sallying out upon Lampe in the neutral ground of the hall, or invaded him even in his own sanctuary of the butler’s pantry. The uproars were everlasting; and thus far it was fortunate for the peace of the philosopher, that his hearing had begun to fail; by which means he was spared many an exhibition of hateful passions and ruffian violence, that annoyed his guests and friends. But now all things had changed: deep silence reigned in the pantry; the kitchen rang no more with martial alarums; and the hall was untroubled with skirmish or pursuit. Yet it may be readily supposed that to Kant, at the age of seventy-eight, changes, even for the better, were not welcome: so intense had been the uniformity of his life and habits, that the least innovation in the arrangement of articles as trifling as a penknife or a pair of scissors disturbed him; and not merely if they were pushed two or three inches out of their customary

position, but even if they were laid a little awry; and as to larger objects, such as chairs, etc., any dislocation of their usual arrangement, any transposition, or addition to their number, perfectly confounded him; and his eye appeared restlessly to haunt the seat of the mal-arrangement, until the ancient order was restored. With such habits the reader may conceive how distressing it must have been to him, at this period of decaying powers, to adapt himself to a new servant, a new voice, a new step, etc.

Aware of this, I had, on the day before he entered upon his duties, written down for the new servant upon a sheet of paper the entire routine of Kant's daily life, down to the minutest and most trivial circumstances; all of which he mastered with the greatest rapidity. To make sure, however, we went through a rehearsal of the whole ritual; he performing the manoeuvres, I looking on, and giving the word. Still I felt uneasy at the idea of his being left entirely to his own discretion on his first *début* in good earnest, and therefore I made a point of attending on this important day; and in the few instances where the new recruit missed the accurate manoeuvre, a glance or a nod from me easily made him comprehend his failure.

One part only there was of the daily ceremonial where all of us were at a loss, since it was that part which no mortal eyes had ever witnessed but those of Lampe: this was breakfast. However, that we might do all in our power, I myself attended at four o'clock in the morning. The day happened, as I remember, to be the first of February 1802. Precisely at five Kant made his appearance; and nothing could equal his astonishment on finding me in the room. Fresh from the confusion of dreaming, and bewildered alike by the sight of his new servant, by Lampe's absence, and by my presence, he could with difficulty be made to comprehend the purpose of my visit. A friend in need is a friend indeed; and we would now have given any money to that learned Theban, who could have instructed us in the arrangement of the breakfast-table. But this was a mystery revealed to none but Lampe. At length Kant took this task upon himself; and apparently all was now settled to his satisfaction. Yet still it struck me that he was under some embarrassment or constraint. Upon this I said that, with his permission, I would take a cup of tea, and afterwards smoke a pipe with him. He accepted my offer with his usual courteous demeanour; but seemed unable to familiarize himself with the novelty of his situation. I was at this time sitting directly opposite to him; and at last he frankly told me, but with the kindest and most apologetic air, that he was really under the necessity of begging that I would sit out of his sight; for that, having sat alone at the breakfast-table for considerably more than half a century, he could not abruptly adapt his mind to a change in this respect; and he found his thoughts very sensibly distracted. I did as he desired; the servant retired into an ante-room, where he waited within call; and Kant recovered his wonted composure.

Just the same scene passed over again, when I called at the same hour on a fine summer morning some months after.

Henceforth all went right: or, if occasionally some little mistake occurred, Kant showed himself very considerate and indulgent, and would remark spontaneously, that a new servant could not be expected to know all his ways and humours. In one respect, however, this new man adapted himself to Kant's scholarlike taste in a way which Lampe was incapable of doing. Kant was somewhat fastidious in matters of pronunciation; and Kaufmann had a great facility in catching the true sound of Latin words, the titles of books, and the names or designations of Kant's friends; not one of which accomplishments could Lampe, the most insufferable of blockheads, ever attain to. In particular, I have been told by Kant's old friends, that for the space of thirty-eight years, during which he had been in the habit of reading the newspaper published by Hartung, Lampe delivered it with the same identical blunder on every day of publication: — "Mr. Professor, here is *Hartmann's* journal." Upon which Kant would reply, "Eh! what? — What's that you say? *Hartmann's* journal? I tell you, it is not *Hartmann's*, but *Hartung's*: now, repeat after me — not *Hartmann's*, but *Hartung's*." Then Lampe, looking sulky, and drawing himself up with the stiff air of a soldier on guard, and in the very same monotonous tone with which he had been used to sing out his challenge of *Who goes there?* would roar, "not *Hartmann's*, but *Hartung's*." — "Now again!" Kant would say: on which again Lampe roared, "Not *Hartmann's*, but *Hartung's*." — "Now a third time," cried Kant: on which for a third time the unhappy Lampe would howl out, in truculent despair, "Not *Hartmann's*, but *Hartung's*." And this whimsical scene of parade duty was continually repeated: duly as the day of publication came round (*viz.*, twice a week), the irreclaimable old dunce was put through the same manœuvres, which were as invariably followed by the same blunder on the next. So that this incorrigible blockhead must have repeated the same unvarying blunder for a hundred and four times annually (*i.e.*, twice a week), multiplied into thirty-eight, as the number of years. For more than one-half of man's normal life under the scriptural allowance, had this never-enough-to-be-admired old donkey foundered punctually on the same identical rock. In spite, however, of this advantage in the new servant, and a general superiority to his predecessor, Kant's nature was too kind, too good, and too indulgent to all people's infirmities but his own, not to miss the voice and the "old familiar face" that he had been accustomed to for forty years. And I met with what struck me as an affecting instance of Kant's yearning after his old good-for-nothing servant in his memorandum-book: other people record what they wish to remember; but Kant had here recorded what he was to forget. "Mem. — February, 1802, the name of Lampe must now be remembered no more."

In the spring of this year, 1802, I advised Kant to take the air. It was

very long since he had been out of doors, and walking was now out of the question. But I thought that perhaps the motion of a carriage and the air might have a chance of reviving him. On the power of vernal sights and sounds I did not much rely; for these had long ceased to affect him. Of all the changes that spring carries with it, there was one only that now interested Kant; and he longed for it with an eagerness and intensity of expectation, that it became almost painful to witness: this was the return of a little bird (sparrow was it, or robin-redbreast?) that sang in his garden, and before his window. This bird, either the same, or one of a younger generation, had sung for years in the same situation; and Kant grew uneasy when the cold weather, lasting longer than usual, retarded its return. Like Lord Bacon, indeed, he had a child-like love for birds in general; and in particular he took pains to encourage the sparrows to build above the windows of his study; and when this happened (as it often did, from the deep silence which prevailed in the room), he watched their proceedings with the delight and the tenderness which others give to a human interest. To return to the point I was speaking of, Kant was at first very unwilling to adopt my proposal of going abroad. "I shall sink down in the carriage," said he, "and fall together like a heap of old rags." But I persisted with a gentle importunity in urging him to the attempt, assuring him that we would return immediately, if he found the effort too much for him. Accordingly, upon a tolerably warm day of early summer, I and an old friend of Kant's accompanied him to a little place which I rented in the country. As we drove through the streets, Kant was delighted to find that he could sit upright, and bear the motion of the carriage, and seemed to draw youthful pleasure from the sight of the towers and other public buildings, which he had not seen for years. We reached the place of our destination in high spirits. Kant drank a cup of coffee, and attempted to smoke a little. After this, he sat and sunned himself, listening with delight to the carolling of birds, which congregated in great numbers about this spot. He distinguished every bird by its song, and called it by its right name. After staying about half an hour, we set off on our homeward journey, Kant still cheerful, but apparently satiated with his day's enjoyment.

I had on this occasion purposely avoided taking him to any public gardens, that I might not disturb his pleasure by exposing him to the distressing gaze of public curiosity. However, it became known in Königsberg that Kant had gone out; and accordingly, as the carriage moved through the streets which led homewards, there was a general rush from all quarters in that direction; and, when we turned into the street where the house stood, we found it already choked up with people. As we slowly drew up to the door, a lane was formed in the crowd, through which Kant was led, I and my friend supporting him on our arms. Looking at the crowd, I observed the faces of many persons of rank and dis-

tinguished strangers, some of whom now saw Kant for the first time, and many of them for the last.

As the winter of 1802-3 approached, he complained more than ever of an affection of the stomach, which no medical man had been able to mitigate, or even to explain. The winter passed over in a complaining way; he was weary of life, and longed for the hour of dismissal. "I can be of service to the world no more," said he, "and am a burden to myself." Often I endeavoured to cheer him by the anticipation of excursions that we might make together when summer came again. On these he calculated with so much earnestness, that he had made a regular scale or classification of them — 1. Airings; 2. Journeys; 3. Travels. And nothing could equal the yearning impatience expressed for the coming of spring and summer, not so much for their own peculiar attractions, as because they were the seasons for travelling. In his memorandum-book he made this note: — "The three summer months are June, July, and August"; meaning that they were the three months for travelling. And in conversation he expressed the feverish strength of his wishes so plaintively and affectingly, that everybody was drawn into powerful sympathy with him, and wished for some magical means of antedating the course of the seasons.

During this winter his bedroom was often warmed. *That* was the room in which he kept his little collection of books, somewhere about four hundred and fifty volumes, chiefly presentation-copies from the authors. It may seem strange that Kant, who read so extensively, should have no larger library; but he had less need of one than most scholars, having in his earlier years been librarian at the Royal Library of the Castle; and since then, having enjoyed from the liberality of Hartknoch, his publisher (who, in his turn, had profited by the liberal terms on which Kant had made over to him the copyright of his own works), the first sight of every new book that appeared.

At the close of this winter (that is, in 1803), Kant first began to complain of unpleasant dreams, sometimes of very terrific ones, which awakened him in great agitation. Oftentimes melodies, which he had heard in earliest youth sung in the streets of Königsberg, resounded painfully in his ears, and dwelt upon them in a way from which no efforts of abstraction could release him. These kept him awake to unseasonable hours; and sometimes, when after long watching he had fallen asleep, however profound his sleep might be, it was suddenly broken up by terrific dreams, which alarmed him beyond description. Almost every night the bell-rope, which communicated with a bell in the room above his own, where his servant slept, was pulled violently, and with the utmost agitation. No matter how fast the servant might hurry down, he was almost always too late, and was pretty sure to find his master out of bed, and often making his way in terror to some other part of the house. The weakness of his feet

exposed him to such dreadful falls on these occasions, that at length (but with much difficulty) I persuaded him to let his servant sleep in the same room with himself.

The morbid affection of the stomach, out of which the dreadful dreams arose, began now to be more and more distressing; and he tried various applications, which he had formerly been loud in condemning, such as a few drops of rum upon a piece of sugar, naphtha, etc. But all these were only palliatives; for his advanced age precluded the hope of a radical cure. His dreams became continually more appalling; single scenes, or passages in these dreams, were sufficient to compose the whole course of mighty tragedies, the impression from which was so profound as to stretch far into his waking hours. Amongst other phantasmata more shocking and indescribable, his dreams constantly represented to him the forms of murderers advancing to his bedside; and so agitated was he by the awful trains of phantoms that swept past him nightly, that in the first confusion of awaking he generally mistook his servant, who was hurrying to his assistance, for a murderer. In the day-time we often conversed upon these shadowy illusions; and Kant, with his usual spirit of stoical contempt for nervous weakness of every sort, laughed at them; and, to fortify his own resolution to contend against them, he wrote down in his memorandum-book, "No surrender now to panics of darkness." At my suggestion, however, he now burned a light in his chamber, so placed as that the rays might be shaded from his face. At first he was very averse to this, though gradually he became reconciled to it. But that he could bear it at all, was to me an expression of the great revolution accomplished by this terrific agency of his dreams. Heretofore, darkness and utter silence were the two pillars on which his sleep rested: no step must approach his room; and as to light, if he saw but a moonbeam penetrating a crevice of the shutters, it made him unhappy; and, in fact, the windows of his bedchamber were barricaded night and day. But now darkness was a terror to him, and silence an oppression. In addition to his lamp, therefore, he had now a repeater in his room. The sound was at first too loud, but means were taken to muffle the hammer; after which both the ticking and the striking became companionable sounds to him.

At this time (spring of 1803) his appetite began to fail, which I thought no good sign. Many persons insist that Kant was in the habit of eating too much for health. I, however, cannot assent to this opinion; for he ate but once a day, and drank no beer. Of this liquor (I mean the strong black beer) he was, indeed, the most determined enemy. If ever a man died prematurely, Kant would say, "He has been drinking beer, I presume." Or, if another were indisposed, you might be sure he would ask, "But does he drink beer?" And, according to the answer on this point, he regulated his anticipations for the patient. Strong beer, in short, he

uniformly maintained to be a slow poison. Voltaire, by the way, had said to a young physician who denounced coffee under the same bad name of a "slow poison," "You're right there, my friend: slow it is, and horribly slow, for I have been drinking it these seventy years, and it has not killed me yet"; but this was an answer which, in the case of beer, Kant would not allow of.

On the 22nd of April, 1803, his birthday, the last which he lived to see, was celebrated in a full assembly of his friends. This festival he had long looked forward to with great expectation and delighted even to hear the progress made in the preparations for it. But, when the day came, the over-excitement and tension of expectation seemed to have defeated itself. He tried to appear happy; but the bustle of a numerous company confounded and distressed him, and his spirits were manifestly forced. He seemed first to revive into any real sense of pleasure at night, when the company had departed, and he was undressing in his study. He then talked with much pleasure about the presents which, as usual, would be made to his servants on this occasion; for Kant was never happy himself, unless he saw all around him happy. He was a great maker of presents; but at the same time he had no toleration for the studied theatrical effect, the accompaniment of formal congratulations, and the sentimental pathos, with which birthday presents are made in Germany. In all this, his masculine taste gave him a sense of something *fade* and ludicrous.

The summer of 1803 was now come, and, visiting Kant one day, I was thunderstruck to hear him direct me, in the most serious tone, to provide the funds necessary for an extensive foreign tour. I made no opposition, but asked his reasons for such a plan; he alleged the miserable sensations he had in his stomach, which were no longer endurable. Knowing what power over Kant a quotation from a Roman poet had always possessed, I simply replied, "Post equitem sedet atra cura"; and for the present he said no more. But the touching and pathetic earnestness with which he was continually ejaculating prayers for warmer weather, made it doubtful to me whether his wishes on this point ought not, partially at least, to be gratified; and I therefore proposed to him a little excursion to the cottage we had visited the year before. "Anywhere," said he, "no matter whither, provided it be far enough." Towards the latter end of June, therefore, we executed this scheme. On getting into the carriage, the order of the day with Kant was, "Distance, distance. Only let us go far enough," said he: but scarcely had we reached the city-gates, before the journey seemed already to have lasted too long. On reaching the cottage, we found coffee waiting for us; but he would scarcely allow himself time for drinking it, before he ordered the carriage to the door; and the journey back seemed insupportably long to him, though it was per-

formed in something less than twenty minutes. "Is this never to have an end?" was his continual exclamation; and great was his joy when he found himself once more in his study, undressed, and in bed. And for this night he slept in peace, and once again was liberated from the persecution of dreams.

Soon after he began again to talk of journeys, of travels in remote countries, etc., and, in consequence, we repeated our former excursion several times; and though the circumstances were pretty nearly the same on every occasion, always terminating in disappointment as to the immediate pleasure anticipated, yet, undoubtedly, they were, on the whole, salutary to his spirits. In particular, the cottage itself, standing under the shelter of tall alders, with a valley silent and solitary stretched beneath it, through which a little brook meandered, broken by a waterfall, whose pealing sound dwelt pleasantly on the ear, sometimes, on a quiet sunny day, gave a lively delight to Kant: and once, under accidental circumstances of summer-clouds and sunlights, the little pastoral landscape suddenly awakened a lively remembrance, which had been long laid asleep, of a heavenly summer morning in youth, which he had passed in a bower upon the banks of a rivulet that ran through the grounds of a dear and early friend, General Von Lossow. The strength of the impression was such, that he seemed actually to be living over that morning again, thinking as he then thought, and conversing with beloved friends that were no more.

His very last excursion was in August of this year (1803), not to my cottage, but to the garden of a friend. On this particular day he manifested great impatience. It had been arranged that he was to meet an old friend at the gardens; and I, with two other gentlemen, attended him. It happened that *our* party arrived first; and thus we had to wait; but only for a few minutes. Such, however, was Kant's weakness, and total loss of power to estimate the duration of time, that, after waiting a few moments, several hours (he fancied) must have elapsed. So that his friend could not be expected. Under this impression he came away, and in discomposure of mind. And so ended Kant's travelling in this world.

In the beginning of autumn, the sight of his right eye began to fail him; the left he had long lost the use of. This earliest of his losses it is noticeable that he had discovered by mere accident. Sitting down one day to rest himself in the course of a walk, it occurred to him that he would try the comparative strength of his eyes; but, on taking out a newspaper which he had in his pocket, he was surprised to find that with his left eye he could not distinguish a letter. In earlier life he had two remarkable affections of the eyes: once, on returning from a walk, he saw objects double for a long space of time; and twice he became stone-blind. Whether these accidents are to be considered as uncommon, I leave to the decision

of oculists. Certain it is, they gave very little disturbance to Kant; who, until old age had lowered the tone of his powers, lived in a constant state of stoical preparation for the worst that could befall him. I was now shocked to think of the degree in which his burdensome sense of dependence would be aggravated, if he should totally lose the power of sight. Even as it was he read and wrote with great difficulty: in fact, his writing was little better than that which most people can produce as a trial of skill with their eyes shut. From old habits of solitary study, he had no pleasure in hearing others read to him; and he daily distressed me by the pathetic earnestness of his entreaties that I would have a reading glass devised for him. Whatever my own optical skill could suggest I tried, and the best opticians were sent for, to bring their glasses, and take his directions for altering them; but all was to no purpose.

In this last year of his life, Kant very unwillingly received the visits of strangers; and, unless under particular circumstances, wholly declined them. Yet, when travellers had come a very great way out of their road to see him, I confess that I was at a loss how to conduct myself. To have refused too pertinaciously, could not but give me the air of wishing to make myself of importance. And I must acknowledge, that, amongst some few instances of importunity and coarse expressions of low-bred curiosity, I witnessed, pretty generally in all ranks, a most delicate sensibility to the condition of the aged recluse. On sending in their cards, they would usually accompany them by some message, expressive of their unwillingness to gratify their wish to see him, at any risk of distressing him. The fact was, that such visits *did* distress him much; for he felt it a degradation to be exhibited in his helpless state, when he was aware of his own incapacity to meet properly the attention that was paid to him. Some, however, were admitted, according to the circumstances of the case and the accidental state of Kant's spirits at the moment. Amongst these, I remember that we were particularly pleased with M. Otto, the same who signed the treaty of peace between France and England with the present Lord Liverpool (then Lord Hawkesbury). A young Russian also rises to my recollection at this moment, from the excessive (and I think unaffected) enthusiasm which he displayed. On being introduced to Kant, he advanced hastily, took both his hands, and kissed them. Kant, who, from living so much amongst his English friends, had a good deal of the English dignified reserve about him, and hated anything like *scenes*, appeared to shrink a little from this mode of salutation, and was rather embarrassed. However, the young man's manner, I believe, was not at all beyond his genuine feelings; for next day he called again, made some enquiries about Kant's health, was very anxious to know whether his old age was burdensome to him, and, above all things, entreated for some little memorial of the great man to carry away with him. By accident the servant had found a small cancelled fragment of the original

MS. of Kant's *Anthropologie*: this, with my sanction, he gave to the Russian; who received it with rapture, kissed it, and then gave to the servant in return the only dollar he had about him; and, thinking that not enough, actually pulled off his coat and waistcoat, and forced them upon the man. Kant, whose native simplicity of character very much indisposed him to sympathy with any extravagances of feeling, could not, however, forbear smiling good-humouredly on being made acquainted with this instance of naïveté and enthusiasm in his young admirer.

I now come to an event in Kant's life which ushered in its closing stage. On the 8th of October, 1803, for the first time since his youth, he was seriously ill. When a student at the university, he had once suffered from an ague, which, however, gave way to pedestrian exercise; and in later years he had endured some pain from a contusion on his head; but, with these two exceptions (if they can be considered such), he had never (properly speaking) been ill. At present, the cause of his illness was this: his appetite had latterly been irregular, or rather I should say depraved; and he no longer took pleasure in anything but bread and butter and English cheese. On the 7th of October, at dinner he ate little else, in spite of everything that I and another friend then dining with him could urge to dissuade him. For the first time I fancied that he seemed displeased with my importunity, as though I were overstepping the just line of my duties. He insisted that the cheese never had done him any harm, nor would now. I had no course left me but to hold my tongue; and he did as he pleased. The consequence was what might have been anticipated — a restless night, succeeded by a day of memorable illness. The next morning all went on as usual, till nine o'clock, when Kant, who was then leaning on his sister's arm, suddenly fell senseless to the ground. A messenger was immediately dispatched for me; and I hurried down to his house, where I found him lying on his bed, which had now been removed into his study, speechless and insensible. I had already summoned his physician: but, before he arrived, nature put forth efforts which brought Kant a little to himself. In about an hour he opened his eyes, and continued to mutter unintelligibly until towards the evening when he rallied a little, and began to talk rationally. For the first time in his life, he was now, for a few days, confined to his bed, and ate nothing. On the 12th of October, he again took some refreshment, and would have had his favourite food; but I was now resolved, at any risk of his displeasure, to oppose him firmly. I therefore stated to him the whole consequences of his last indulgence, of all which he manifestly had no recollection. He listened to what I said very attentively, and calmly expressed his conviction that I was perfectly in the wrong; but for the present he submitted. However, some days after, I found that he had been offering a florin for a little bread and cheese, and then a dollar, and even more. Being again refused,

he complained heavily; but gradually he weaned himself from asking for it, though at times he betrayed involuntarily how much he desired it.

On the 13th of October, his usual dinner parties were resumed, and he was considered convalescent; but it was seldom indeed that he recovered the tone of tranquil spirits which he had preserved until his late attack. Hitherto he had always loved to prolong this meal, the only one he took — or, as he expressed it in classical phrase, "*cœnam ducere* "; but now it was difficult to hurry it over fast enough for his wishes. From dinner, which terminated about two o'clock, he went straight to bed, and at intervals fell into slumbers; from which, however, he was regularly roused up by phantasmata or terrific dreams. At seven in the evening came on duly a period of great distress, which lasted till five or six in the morning — sometimes later; and he continued through the night alternately to walk about and lie down, occasionally tranquil, but more often in great agitation.

It now became necessary that somebody should sit up with him, his man-servant being wearied out with the toils of the day. No person seemed to be so proper for this office as his sister, both as having long received a very liberal pension from him, and also as his nearest relative, who would be the best witness to the fact that her illustrious brother had wanted no comforts or attention in his last hours which his situation admitted of. Accordingly she was applied to, and undertook to watch him alternately with his footman — a separate table being kept for her, and a very handsome addition made to her allowance. She turned out to be a quiet, gentle-minded woman, who raised no disturbances amongst the servants, and soon won her brother's regard by the modest and retiring style of her manners; I may add, also, by the truly sisterly affection which she displayed towards him to the last.

The 8th of October had grievously affected Kant's faculties, but had not wholly destroyed them. For short intervals the clouds seemed to roll away that had settled upon his majestic intellect, and it now shone forth as heretofore. During these moments of brief self-possession, his wonted benignity returned to him; and he expressed his gratitude for the exertions of those about him, and his sense of the trouble they underwent, in a very affecting way. With regard to his man-servant, in particular, he was very anxious that he should be rewarded by liberal presents; and he pressed me earnestly on no account to be parsimonious. Indeed, Kant was nothing less than princely in his use of money; and there was no occasion on which he was known to express the passion of scorn very powerfully, but when he was commenting on mean and penurious acts or habits. Those who knew him only in the streets, fancied that he was not liberal; for he steadily refused, upon principle, to relieve all common beggars. But, on the other hand, he was most liberal to the public charitable institutions; secretly also he assisted his own poor relations in a

much ampler way than could reasonably have been expected of him; and it now appeared that he had many other deserving pensioners upon his bounty: a fact that was utterly unknown to any of us, until his increasing blindness and other infirmities devolved the duty of paying these pensions upon myself. It must be recollected, also, that Kant's whole fortune (which, exclusively of his official appointments, did not amount to more than 20,000 dollars) was the product of his own honourable toils for nearly threescore years, and that he had himself suffered all the hardships of poverty in his youth, though he never once ran into any man's debt; circumstances in his history which, as they express how fully he must have been acquainted with the value of money, greatly enhance the merit of his munificence.

In December, 1803, he became incapable of signing his name. His sight, indeed, had for some time failed him so much, that at dinner he could not find his spoon without assistance; and, when I happened to dine with him, I first cut in pieces whatever was on his plate, next put it into a dessert-spoon, and then guided his hand to find the spoon. But his inability to sign his name did not arise merely from blindness: the fact was, that, from irretention of memory, he could not recollect the letters which composed his name; and, when they were repeated to him, he could not represent the figure of the letters in his imagination. At the latter end of November, I had remarked that these incapacities were rapidly growing upon him, and in consequence I prevailed on him to sign beforehand all the receipts, etc., which would be wanted at the end of the year; and afterwards, on my representation, to prevent all disputes, he gave me a regular legal power to sign on his behalf.

Much as Kant was now reduced, yet he had occasionally moods of social hilarity. His birthday was always an agreeable subject to him; some weeks before his death, I was calculating the time which it still wanted of that anniversary, and cheering him with the prospect of the rejoicings which would then take place. "All your old friends," said I, "will meet together, and drink a glass of champagne to your health." — "That," said he, "must be done upon the spot"; and he was not satisfied till the party was actually assembled. He drank a glass of wine with them, and, with great elevation of spirits, celebrated by anticipation this birthday which he was destined never to see.

In the latter weeks of his life, however, a great change took place in the tone of his spirits. At his dinner-table, where heretofore such a cloudless spirit of joviality had reigned, there was now a melancholy silence. It disturbed him to see his two dinner companions conversing privately together, whilst he himself sat like a mute on the stage with no part to perform. Yet to have engaged him in the conversation would have been still more distressing, for his hearing was now very imperfect; the effort to hear was itself painful to him; and his expressions, even when his thoughts were

accurate enough, became nearly unintelligible. It is remarkable, however, that at the very lowest point of his depression, when he became perfectly incapable of conversing with any rational meaning on the ordinary affairs of life, he was still able to answer correctly and distinctly, in a degree that was perfectly astonishing, upon any question of philosophy or of science, especially of physical geography, chemistry, or natural history. He talked satisfactorily, in his very worst state, of the gases, and stated very accurately different propositions of Kepler's, especially the law of their planetary motions. And I remember, in particular, that upon the very last Monday of his life, when the extremity of his weakness moved a circle of his friends to tears, and he sat amongst us insensible to all we could say to him, cowering down, or rather, I might say, collapsing into a shapeless heap upon his chair, deaf, blind, torpid, motionless — even then I whispered to the others, that I would engage that Kant should take his part in conversation with propriety and animation. This they found it difficult to believe. Upon which I drew close to his ear, and put a question to him about the Moors of Barbary. To the surprise of everybody but myself, he immediately gave us a summary account of their habits and customs; and told us, by the way, that in the word *Algiers* the *g* ought to be pronounced hard (as in the English word *gear*).

During the last fortnight of Kant's life, he busied himself unceasingly in a way that seemed not merely purposeless, but self-contradictory. Twenty times in a minute he would unloose and tie his neck-handkerchief; so also with a sort of belt which he wore about his dressing-gown; the moment it was clasped, he unclasped it with impatience, and was then equally impatient to have it clasped again. But no description can convey an adequate impression of the weary restlessness with which from morning to night he pursued these labours of Sisyphus — doing and undoing — fretting that he could not do it, fretting that he had done it.

By this time he seldom knew any of us who were about him, but took us all for strangers. This happened first with his sister, then with me, and finally with his servant. Such an alienation from us all distressed me more than any other instance of his decay: though I knew that he had not really withdrawn his affection from me, yet his air and mode of addressing me gave me constantly that feeling. So much the more affecting was it, when the sanity of his perceptions and his remembrances returned, but at intervals of slower and slower recurrence. In this condition, silent or babbling childishly, self-involved and torpidly abstracted, or else busy with self-created phantoms and delusions, waking up for a moment to trifles, sinking back for hours to what might perhaps be disjointed fragments of grand perishing reveries, what a contrast did he offer to *that* Kant who had once been the brilliant centre of the most brilliant circles for rank, wit, or knowledge, that Prussia afforded! A distinguished person from Berlin, who had called upon him during the preceding summer, was greatly shocked

at his appearance, and said. " This is not Kant that I have seen, but the shell of Kant! " How much more would he have said this, if he had seen him now.

For now came February, 1804, which was the last month that Kant was destined to see. It is remarkable that, in the memorandum-book which I have before mentioned, I found a fragment of an old song (inserted by Kant, and dated in the summer about six months before the time of his death), which expressed that February was the month in which people had the least weight to carry, for the obvious reason that it was shorter by two and by three days than the others; and the concluding sentiment was in a tone of fanciful pathos to this effect — " Oh, happy February! in which man has least to bear — least pain, least sorrow, least self-reproach! " Even of this short month, however, Kant had not twelve entire days to bear, for it was on the twelfth that he died; and, in fact, he may be said to have been dying from the first. He now barely vegetated; though there were still transitory gleams flashing fitfully from the embers of his ancient magnificent intellect.

On the 3rd of February the springs of life seemed to be ceasing from their play; for from this day, strictly speaking, he ate nothing more. His existence henceforward seemed to be the mere prolongation of an impetus derived from an eighty years' life, after the moving power of the mechanism was withdrawn. His physician visited him every day at a particular hour; and it was settled that I should always be there to meet him. Nine days before his death, on paying his usual visit, the following little circumstance occurred, which affected us both, by recalling forcibly to our minds the ineradicable courtesy and goodness of Kant's nature. When the physician was announced, I went up to Kant, and said to him, " Here is Dr. A——." Kant rose from his chair, and, offering his hand to the doctor, murmured something in which the word " posts " was frequently repeated, but with an air as though he wished to be helped out with the rest of the sentence. Dr. A——, who thought that, by *posts*, he meant the stations for relays of post-horses, and therefore that his mind was wandering, replied, that all the horses were engaged, and begged him to compose himself. But Kant went on, with great effort to himself, and added, " Many posts, heavy posts — then much goodness — then much gratitude." All this he said with apparent incoherence, but with great warmth, and increasing self-possession. I meantime perfectly divined what it was that Kant, under his cloud of imbecility, wished to say, and I interpreted accordingly. " What the professor wishes to say, Dr. A——, is this, that, considering the many and weighty posts which you fill in the city and in the university, it argues great goodness on your part to give up so much of your time to him " (for Dr. A—— would never take any fees from Kant); " and that he has the deepest sense of this goodness." — " Right," said Kant, earnestly —

“right!” But he still continued to stand, and was nearly sinking to the ground. Upon which I remarked to the physician, that Kant, as I was well convinced, would not sit down, however much he suffered from standing, until he knew that his visitors were seated. The doctor seemed to doubt this; but Kant, who heard what I said, by a prodigious effort confirmed my construction of his conduct, and spoke distinctly these words — “God forbid I should be sunk so low as to forget the offices of humanity.”

When dinner was announced, Dr. A—— took his leave. Another guest had now arrived, and I was in hopes, from the animation which Kant had so recently displayed, that we should today have a pleasant party; but my hopes were vain — Kant was more than usually exhausted; and, though he raised a spoon to his mouth, he swallowed nothing. For some time everything had been tasteless to him; and I had endeavoured, but with little success, to stimulate the organs of taste by nutmeg, cinnamon, etc. To-day all failed, and I could not prevail upon him to taste even a biscuit, rusk, or anything of that sort. I had once heard him say that several of his friends, whose complaint was *marasmus*, had closed their illness by four or five days of entire freedom from pain, but totally without appetite, and then slumbered tranquilly away. Through this state I apprehended that he was himself now passing.

Saturday, the 4th of February, I heard his guests loudly expressing their fears that they should never meet him again; and I could not but share these fears myself. However, on

Sunday, the 5th, I dined at his table in company with his particular friend Mr. R. R. V. Kant was still present, but so weak that his head dropped upon his knees, and he sank down against the right side of the chair. I went and arranged his pillows, so as to raise and support his head: and, having done this, I said, “Now, my dear sir, you are again in right order.” Great was our astonishment when he answered clearly and audibly, in the Roman military phrase, “Yes, *testudine et facie*”; and immediately after added, “Ready for the enemy, and in battle array.” His powers of mind were smouldering away in their ashes; but every now and then some lambent flame, or grand emanation of light, shot forth, to make it evident that the ancient fire still slumbered below.

Monday, the 6th, he was much weaker and more torpid: he spoke not a word except on the occasion of my question about the Moors, as previously stated, and sat with sightless eyes, lost in himself, and manifesting no sense of our presence, so that we had the feeling of some mighty phantom from some forgotten century being seated amongst us.

About this time, Kant had become much more tranquil and composed. In the earlier periods of his illness, when his yet unbroken strength was brought into active conflict with the first attacks of decay, he was apt to be peevish, and sometimes spoke roughly or even harshly to his servants. This, though very opposite to his natural disposition, was altogether excus-

able under the circumstances. He could not make himself understood: things were therefore brought to him continually which he had not asked for; and what he really wanted oftentimes he could not obtain, because all his efforts to name it were unintelligible. A violent nervous irritation, besides, affected him, from the unsettling of the equilibrium in the different functions of his nature: weakness in one organ being made more palpable to him by disproportionate strength in another. But at length the strife was finished: the whole system was thoroughly undermined, and now moving forward in rapid and harmonious progress to dissolution. From this time till all was over, no movement of impatience, or expression of fretfulness, ever escaped him.

I now visited him three times a day; and on

Tuesday, February 7, going about dinner-time, I found the usual party of friends sitting down alone; for Kant was in bed. This was a new scene in *his* house, and increased our fears that his end was close at hand. However, having seen him rally so often, I would not run the risk of leaving him without a dinner-party for the next day; and accordingly, at the customary hour of one, we assembled in his house on

Wednesday, February 8. I paid my respects to him as cheerfully as possible, and ordered dinner to be served. Kant sat at the table with us; and, taking a spoon with a little soup in it, carried it to his lips, but immediately put it down again, and retired to bed, from which he never rose again.

Thursday, the 9th, he had sunk into the weakness of a dying person, and the corpse-like appearance (the *facies Hippocratica*) had already taken possession of him. I visited him frequently through the course of the day; and going for the last time about ten o'clock at night, I found him in a state of insensibility. I could not draw any sign from him that he knew me, and I left him to the care of his sister and his servant.

Friday, the 10th, I went to see him at six o'clock in the morning. It was very stormy, and a deep snow had fallen in the night-time. And, by the way, I remember that a gang of house-breakers had forced their way through the premises, in order to reach Kant's next neighbour, who was a goldsmith. As I drew near to his bedside, I said, "Good-morning." He returned my salutation, by saying, "Good-morning," but in so feeble and faltering a voice that it was hardly articulate. I was rejoiced to find him sensible, and asked him if he knew me. — "Yes," he replied; and, stretching out his hand, touched me gently upon the cheek. Through the rest of the day, whenever I visited him, he seemed to have relapsed into a state of insensibility.

Saturday, the 11th, he lay with fixed and rayless eyes; but to all appearance in perfect peace. I asked him again, on this day, if he knew me. He was speechless, but he turned his face towards me, and made signs that I should kiss him. Deep emotion thrilled me as I stooped down to kiss his

pallid lips; for I knew that in this solemn act of tenderness he meant to express his thankfulness for our long friendship, and to signify his last farewell. I had never seen him confer this mark of his love upon anybody except once, and that was a few weeks before his death, when he drew his sister to him and kissed her. The kiss which he now gave to me was the last memorial that he knew me.

Whatever fluid was now offered to him passed the œsophagus with a rattling sound, as often happens with dying people; and there were all the signs of death being close at hand.

I wished to stay with him till all was over; and, as I had been amongst the nearest witnesses of his life, to be witness also of his departure; and, therefore, I never quitted him, except when I was called off for a few minutes to attend some private business. The whole of this night I spent at his bedside. Though he had passed the day in a state of insensibility, yet in the evening he made intelligible signs that he wished to have his bed put in order; he was therefore lifted out in our arms, and the bedclothes and pillows being hastily arranged, he was carried back again. He did not sleep; and a spoonful of liquid, which was sometimes put to his lips, he usually pushed aside; but about one o'clock in the night he himself made a movement towards the spoon, from which I collected that he was thirsty; and I gave him a small quantity of wine and water sweetened; but the muscles of his mouth had not strength enough to retain it; so that, to prevent its flowing back, he raised his hand to his lips, until with a rattling sound it was swallowed. He seemed to wish for more; and I continued to give him more, until he said, in a way that I was just able to understand, "It is enough." And these were his last words. It is enough! Sufficit! Mighty and symbolic words! At intervals he pushed away the bedclothes, and exposed his person; I constantly restored the clothes to their situation, and on one of these occasions I found that the whole body and extremities were already growing cold, and the pulse intermitting.

At a quarter after three o'clock on Sunday morning, February 12, 1804, Kant stretched himself out as if taking up a position for his final act, and settled into the precise posture which he preserved to the moment of death. The pulse was now no longer perceptible to the touch in his hands, feet, or neck. I tried every part where a pulse beats, and found none but in the left hip, where it continued to beat with violence, but often intermitted.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon he suffered a remarkable change; his eye was rigid, and his face and lips became discoloured by a cadaverous pallor. Still, such was the intensity of his constitutional habits, that no trace appeared of the cold sweat which naturally accompanies the last mortal agony.

It was near eleven o'clock when the moment of dissolution approached. His sister was standing at the foot of the bed, his sister's son at the head. I, for the purpose of still observing the fluctuations in the pulse, was

kneeling at the bedside; and I called his servant to come and witness the death of his good master. The last agony was now advancing to its close, if *agony* it could be called, where there seemed to be no struggle. And precisely at this moment, his distinguished friend Mr. R. R. V., whom I had summoned by a messenger, entered the room. First of all, the breath grew feebler; then it missed its regularity of return; then it wholly intermitted, and the upper lip was slightly convulsed; after this there followed one feeble respiration or sigh; and after that no more; but the pulse still beat for a few seconds—slower and fainter, slower and fainter, till it ceased altogether; the mechanism stopped; the last motion was at an end; and exactly at that moment the clock struck eleven.

Soon after his death the head of Kant was shaved; and, under the direction of Professor Knorr, a plaster cast was taken, not a mask merely, but a cast of the whole head, designed (I believe) to enrich the craniological collection of Dr. Gall.

The corpse being laid out and properly attired, immense numbers of people in every rank, from the highest to the lowest, flocked to see it. Everybody was anxious to avail himself of the last opportunity he would have for entitling himself to say, "I too have seen Kant." This went on for many days, during which, from morning to night, the house was thronged with the public. Great was the astonishment of all people at the meagreness of Kant's appearance; and it was universally agreed that a corpse so wasted and fleshless had never been beheld. His head rested upon the same cushion on which once the gentlemen of the university had presented an address to him; and I thought that I could not apply it to a more honourable purpose than by placing it in the coffin, as the final pillow of that immortal head.

Upon the style and mode of his funeral, Kant had expressed his wishes in earlier years by a special memorandum. He there desired that it should take place early in the morning, with as little noise and disturbance as possible, and attended only by a few of his most intimate friends. Happening to meet with this memorandum, whilst I was engaged at his request in arranging his papers, I very frankly gave him my opinion, that such an injunction would lay me, as the executor of his will, under great embarrassments; for that circumstances might very probably arise under which it would be next to impossible to carry it into effect. Upon this Kant tore the paper, and left the whole to my own discretion. The fact was, I foresaw that the students of the university would never allow themselves to be robbed of this occasion for expressing their veneration by a public funeral. The event showed that I was right; for a funeral such as Kant's, one so solemn and so magnificent, the city of Königsberg has never witnessed before or since. The public journals, and separate reports in pamphlets, etc.,

have given so minute an account of its details, that I shall here notice only the heads of the ceremony.

On the 28th of February, at two o'clock in the afternoon, all the dignitaries of church and state, not only those resident in Königsberg, but from the remotest parts of Prussia, assembled in the church of the castle. Hence they were escorted by the whole body of the university, splendidly dressed for the occasion, and by many military officers of rank, with whom Kant had always been a great favourite, to the house of the deceased professor; from which the corpse was carried by torch-light, the bells of every church in Königsberg tolling, to the cathedral, which was lit up by innumerable wax-lights. A never-ending train of people followed it on foot. In the cathedral, after the usual burial rites, accompanied with every possible expression of national veneration to the deceased, there was a grand musical service, most admirably performed; at the close of which, Kant's mortal remains were lowered into the academic vault; and there he now rests among the patriarchs of the university. PEACE BE TO HIS DUST; AND TO HIS MEMORY EVERLASTING HONOUR!

JOHANN WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

1756-1791

By HENRI BEYLE [STENDHAL]¹ (1783-1842)



THE father of Mozart had the greatest influence upon the singular destiny of his son, whose dispositions he developed, and perhaps modified: it is therefore necessary, in the first place, to say a few words concerning him.

Leopold Mozart was the son of a bookbinder of Augsburg. He pursued his studies at Salzburg; and, in 1743, was admitted into the number of the musicians of the prince-archbishop of that city. In 1762, he became sub-director of the prince's chapel. As the duties of his office did not take up the whole of his time, he employed a part of it in giving lessons on the violin, and teaching the rules of musical composition. He published "An Essay on teaching the Violin with Accuracy," which met with good success. He married Anna Maria Pertl; and it has been remarked, as a circumstance worthy the attention of an exact observer, that this couple, who gave birth to an artist so happily organized for musical harmony, were noted in Salzburg for their uncommon beauty.

Of seven children sprung from this marriage, two only lived; a daughter, Mary Ann, and a son, of whom we are now to speak.

John Chrysostom Wolfgang Theophilus [Amadeus] Mozart, was born at Salzburg, on the 27th of January, 1756. A few years afterwards, his father discontinued giving lessons in the town, and determined to devote all the time which the duties of his office left at his disposal, to the superintendence of the musical education of his two children.

The daughter, who was rather older than Wolfgang, made great proficiency, and shared the public admiration with her brother, in the excursions which she afterwards made with her family. She married, in the sequel, a counsellor of the prince-archbishop of Salzburg, preferring domestic happiness to the renown of distinguished talent.

Mozart was scarcely three years old when his father began to give lessons on the harpsichord to his sister, who was then seven. His astonishing disposition for music immediately manifested itself. His delight was to seek for *thirds* on the piano, and nothing could equal his joy when he had

¹ Reprinted from *The Life of Haydn . . . Followed by the Life of Mozart*, etc. Translated from the French of L. A. C. Bombet [Stendhal] . . . by William Gardiner, Boston, 1839.

Stendhal's *Mozart* is to a great extent his own work, though he declares it a translation from the German of Schlichtegroll. Originally written in 1814.

found this harmonious chord. The minute details into which I am about to enter, will, I presume, be interesting to the reader.

When he was four years old, his father began to teach him, almost in sport, some minuets, and other pieces of music, an occupation which was as agreeable to the master, as to the pupil. Mozart would learn a minuet in half an hour, and a piece of greater extent in less than twice that time. Immediately after, he played them with the greatest clearness, and perfectly in time. In less than a year, he made such rapid progress, that, at five years old, he already invented little pieces of music which he played to his father, and which the latter, in order to encourage the rising talent of his son, was at the trouble of writing down. Before the little Mozart acquired a taste for music, he was so fond of all the amusements of his age, which were in any way calculated to interest him, that he sacrificed even his meals to them. On every occasion he manifested a feeling and affectionate heart. He would say ten times in a day to those about him, "Do you love me well?" and whenever in jest they said "No," the tears would roll down his cheeks. From the moment he became acquainted with music, his relish for the sports and amusements of his age vanished, or to render them pleasing to him, it was necessary to introduce music in them. A friend of his parents often amused himself in playing with him: sometimes they carried the playthings in procession from one room to another; then, the one who had nothing to carry, sung a march, or played it on the violin.

During some months, a fondness for the usual studies of his childhood gained such an ascendancy over Wolfgang, that he sacrificed every thing, even music, to it. While he was learning arithmetic, the tables, the chairs, and even the walls, were covered with figures which he had chalked upon them. The vivacity of his mind led him to attach himself easily to every new object that was presented to him. Music, however, soon became again the favorite object of his pursuit. He made such rapid advances in it, that his father, notwithstanding he was always with him, and in the way of observing his progress, could not help regarding him as a prodigy. The following anecdote, related by an eyewitness, is a proof of this.

His father, returning from the church one day with a friend, found his son busy in writing. "What are you doing there, my little fellow?" asked he. "I am composing a *concerto* for the harpsichord, and have almost got to the end of the first part." "Let us see this fine scrawl." "No, I have not yet finished it." The father, however, took the paper, and showed his friend a sheet-full of notes, which could scarcely be deciphered for the blots of ink. The two friends at first laughed heartily at this heap of scribbling, but, after a little time, when the father had looked at it with more attention, his eyes were fastened on the paper; and, at length, overflowed with tears of joy, and wonder, "Look, my friend," said he, with a smile of delight; "every thing is composed according to the rules;

it is a pity that the piece cannot be made any use of, but it is too difficult; nobody would be able to play it." "It is a *concerto*," replied the son, "and must be studied till it can be properly played. This is the style in which it ought to be executed." He accordingly began to play, but succeeded only so far as to give them an idea of what he had intended. At that time, the young Mozart firmly believed that to play a *concerto* was about as easy as to work a miracle, and, accordingly, the composition in question was a heap of notes, correctly placed, but presenting so many difficulties, that the most skilful performer would have found it impossible to play it.

The young composer so astonished his father, that the latter conceived the idea of exhibiting him at the different courts in Germany. There is nothing extraordinary in such an idea in this country. As soon, therefore, as Wolfgang had attained his sixth year, the Mozart family, consisting of the father, the mother, the daughter, and Wolfgang, took a journey to Munich. The two children performed before the elector, and received infinite commendations. This first expedition succeeded in every respect. The young artists, delighted with the reception they had met with, redoubled their application on their return to Salzburg, and acquired a degree of execution on the piano, which no longer required the consideration of their youth to render it highly remarkable. During the autumn of the year 1762, the whole family repaired to Vienna, and the children performed before the court.

The emperor Francis I. said, in jest, on that occasion, to little Wolfgang; "It is not very difficult to play with all one's fingers, but to play with only one, without seeing the keys, would indeed be extraordinary." Without manifesting the least surprise at this strange proposal, the child immediately began to play with a single finger, and with the greatest possible precision, and clearness. He afterwards desired them to cover the keys of the piano-forte, and continued to play in the same manner, as if he had long practised it.

✱ From his most tender age, Mozart, animated with the true feeling of his art, was never vain of the compliments paid him by the great. He only performed insignificant trifles when he had to do with people unacquainted with music. He played, on the contrary, with all the fire and attention of which he was capable, when in the presence of connoisseurs; and his father was often obliged to have recourse to artifice, in order to make the great men, before whom he was to exhibit, pass for such with him. When Mozart, at the age of six years, sat down to play in presence of the emperor Francis, he addressed himself to his majesty, and asked: "Is not M. Wagenseil here? We must send for him; he understands the thing." The emperor sent for Wagenseil, and gave up his place to him, by the side of the piano. "Sir," said Mozart, to the composer, "I am going to play one of your *concertos*, you must turn over the leaves for me."

Hitherto, Wolfgang had only played on the harpsichord, and the extraor-

dinary skill which he displayed on that instrument, seemed to exclude even the wish that he should apply to any other. But the genius which animated him, far surpassed any hopes that his friends could have dared to entertain; he had not even occasion for lessons.

On his return from Vienna to Salzburg with his parents, he brought with him a small violin, which had been given him during his residence at the capital, and amused himself with it. A short time afterwards, Wenzl, a skilful violin player, who had then just begun to compose, came to Mozart, the father, to request his observations on six trios, which he had written during the journey of the former to Vienna. Schachtner, the archbishop's trumpeter, to whom Mozart was particularly attached, happened to be at the house, and we give the following anecdote in his words:

"The father," said Schachtner, "played the bass, Wenzl the first violin, and I was to play the second. Mozart requested permission to take this last part; but his father reproved him for this childish demand, observing, that as he had never received any regular lessons on the violin, he could not possibly play it properly. The son replied, that it did not appear to him necessary to receive lessons in order to play the second violin. His father, half angry at this reply, told him to go away, and not interrupt us. Wolfgang was so hurt at this, that he began to cry bitterly. As he was going away with his little violin, I begged that he might be permitted to play with me, and the father, with a good deal of difficulty, consented. 'Well,' said he to Wolfgang, 'you may play with M. Schachtner, on condition that you play very softly, and do not let yourself be heard; otherwise, I shall send you out directly.'" We began the trio, little Mozart playing with me, but it was not long before I perceived, with the greatest astonishment, that I was perfectly useless. Without saying any thing, I laid down my violin, and looked at the father, who shed tears of affection at the sight. The child played all the six trios in the same manner. The commendations we gave him made him pretend that he could play the first violin. To humor him, we let him try, and could not forbear laughing on hearing him execute this part, very imperfectly, it is true, but still so as never to be set fast."

† Every day afforded fresh proofs of Mozart's exquisite organization for music. He could distinguish, and point out, the slightest differences of sound, and every false or even rough note, not softened by some chord, was a torture to him. It was from this cause, that during the early part of his childhood, and even till he had attained his tenth year, he had an insurmountable horror for the trumpet, when it was not used merely as an accompaniment. The sight of this instrument produced upon him much the same impression as that of a loaded pistol does upon other children, when pointed at them in sport. His father thought he could cure him of this fear, by causing the trumpet to be blown in his presence, notwith-

standing his son's entreaties to be spared that torment; but, at the first blast, he turned pale, fell upon the floor, and would probably have been in convulsions, if they had not immediately ceased.

After he had made some proficiency upon the violin, he occasionally made use of that of Schachtner, the family friend whom we have just mentioned, which he highly esteemed, because he drew from it sounds extremely soft. Schachtner, one day, came to the house, while the young Mozart was amusing himself with playing on his own violin. "What is your violin doing?" was the child's first inquiry; and he then went on playing fantasies. After a few moments' pause, he said to Schachtner, "Could not you have left me your violin, tuned as it was when I last used it? It is half a quarter of a note below this." They at first laughed at this scrupulous exactness; but the father, who had often observed his son's extraordinary memory for sounds, sent for the violin, and, to the great astonishment of all present, it was half a quarter of a note below the other, as Wolfgang had said.

Though the child every day beheld new proofs of the astonishment, and admiration, inspired by his talents, it neither rendered him proud, nor self-willed: a man in talent, in every thing else he was an obedient and docile child. Never did he appear dissatisfied with any thing that his father ordered. Even after playing the whole of the day, he would continue to do so, without showing the least ill-humor, when his father desired it. He understood, and obeyed the slightest signs made by his parents, and carried his obedience so far as to refuse the sweetmeats which were offered him, when he had not their permission to accept them.

In the month of July, 1763, when he was in his seventh year, his family set out on their first expedition beyond the boundaries of Germany: and it is from this period that the celebrity of the name of Mozart in Europe is to be dated. The tour commenced with Munich, where the young artist played a concerto on the violin, in presence of the elector, after an extempore prelude. At Augsburg, Mannheim, Francfort, Coblenz, Brussels, the two children gave public concerts, or played before the princes of the district, and received everywhere the greatest commendations.

In the month of November they arrived at Paris, where they remained five months. They performed at Versailles, and Wolfgang played the organ of the king's chapel before the court. They gave in Paris two grand public concerts, and universally met with the most distinguished reception. They were even so far honored as to have their portraits taken; the father was engraved between his two children, from a design of Carmontelle's. It was at Paris that Mozart composed and published his first two works, one of which he dedicated to the princess Victoire, second daughter of Louis XV., and the other to the Countess de Tesse.

In April, 1764, the Mozarts went to England, where they remained till

about the middle of the following year. The children performed before the King, and, as at Versailles, the son played the organ of the royal chapel. His performance on the organ was thought more of, at London, than his exhibitions on the harpsichord. During his stay there, he and his sister gave a grand concert, all the symphonies of which were his own composition.

It may be supposed that the two children, and especially Wolfgang, did not stop at a degree of proficiency, which every day procured them such flattering applause. Notwithstanding their continual removals, they practised with the greatest regularity, and Wolfgang began to sing difficult airs, which he executed with great expression. The incredulous, at Paris and at London, had put him to the trial with various difficult pieces of Bach, Handel, and other masters: he played them immediately, at first sight, and with the greatest possible correctness. He played, one day, before the king of England, a piece full of melody, from the bass only. At another time, Christian Bach, the queen's music-master, took little Mozart between his knees, and played a few bars. Mozart then continued and they thus played alternately a whole sonata, with such precision, that those who did not see them thought it was executed by the same person. During his residence in England, that is, when he was eight years old, Wolfgang composed six sonatas, which were engraved at London and dedicated to the queen.

In the month of July, 1765, the Mozart family returned to Calais, from whence they continued their journey through Flanders, where the young artist often played the organs of the monasteries, and cathedral churches. At the Hague, the two children had an illness which endangered their lives, and from which they were four months in recovering. Wolfgang composed six sonatas for the piano-forte during his convalescence, which he dedicated to the princess of Nassau-Weilbour. In the beginning of the year 1766, they passed a month at Amsterdam, from whence they repaired to the Hague, to be present at the installation of the prince of Orange. Mozart composed for this solemnity a *quodlibet* for all the instruments, and also different airs and variations for the princess. ¶

After having performed several times before the Stadtholder, they returned to Paris, where they stayed two months, and then returned to Germany, by Lyons and Switzerland. At Munich, the elector gave Mozart a musical *theme*, and required him to develop it, and write it down immediately, which he did in the prince's presence, without recurring either to the harpsichord or the violin. — After writing it, he played it; which excited the greatest astonishment in the elector and his whole court. After an absence of more than three years, they returned to Salzburg, towards the end of November, 1766, where they remained till the autumn of the following year; and this tranquillity seemed further to augment the talents of Wolfgang. In 1768, the children performed at Vienna, in

presence of the emperor Joseph II, who commissioned Mozart to compose the music of an opera buffa, — the *Finta Semplice*. It was approved of by Hasse, the chapel-master, and by Metastasio, but was never brought on the stage.

On many occasions, at the houses of the professors Bono, and Hasse, of Metastasio, of the duke of Braganza, of prince Kaunitz, the father desired any Italian air that was at hand to be given to his son, who wrote the parts for all the instruments in presence of the company. At the dedication of the church of *The Orphans* he composed the music of the mass, the motet, and a trumpet duet, and directed this solemn music, in presence of the imperial court, though he was at that time only twelve years old.

He returned to pass the year 1769 at Salzburg. In the month of December, his father took him into Italy, just after he had been appointed director of the archbishop of Salzburg's concert. We may imagine the reception given in that country to this celebrated child, who had excited such admiration in the other parts of Europe.

The house of Count Firmian, the governor-general, was the theatre of his glory at Milan. After having received the poem of the opera to be performed during the Carnival of 1771, and of which he undertook to write the music, Wolfgang quitted that city in the month of March, 1770. At Bologna, he found an enthusiastic admirer in the celebrated Father Martini, the same person of whom Jomelli came to take lessons. Father Martini, and the Bologna amateurs, were transported at seeing a child of thirteen, whose small stature made him appear still younger, develop all the subjects of fugues proposed by Martini, and execute them on the piano-forte, without hesitating, and with the greatest precision. At Florence, he excited similar astonishment by the correctness with which he played, at sight, the most difficult fugues and themes, proposed to him by the marquis de Ligneville, a distinguished amateur.

We have an anecdote respecting him, during his residence at Florence, which does not immediately relate to music. He became acquainted, in that city, with a young Englishman, of about his own age, whose name was Thomas Linley. He was a pupil of Martini, and played on the violin with admirable skill, and gracefulness. The friendship of the two boys became quite ardent, and, on the day of their separation, Linley gave his friend Mozart some verses, which he had procured for the purpose, from the celebrated Corinna. He accompanied him to the gate of the town, and their parting was attended with a copious effusion of tears.

In the passion-week, the Mozarts repaired to Rome, where, as may be supposed, they did not fail to hear the celebrated *Miserere* performed in the Sixtine chapel, on the evening of Ash-Wednesday. As it was said, at that time, that the pope's musicians were forbidden to give copies of it under pain of excommunication, Wolfgang determined to commit it to

memory, and actually wrote it all down on his return to his inn. The service being repeated, on Good-Friday, he again attended with his manuscript in his hat, and had thus an opportunity of making some corrections. The story was much talked of in Rome, but the thing appeared so incredible, that, in order to ascertain its truth, the child was engaged to sing this *Miserere* at a public concert. He executed it to perfection, and the amazement of Cristofori, who had sung it at the Sixtine chapel, and who was present, rendered the triumph of Mozart complete.

The difficulty of what he thus accomplished is much greater than may at first be imagined. But, for the sake of explanation, I shall enter into a few details respecting the Sixtine chapel, and the *Miserere*.

In this chapel, there are usually not less than thirty-two voices, without an organ, or any other instrument to accompany or support them. The establishment reached its highest perfection about the commencement of the eighteenth century. — Since that time, the salaries of the singers at the pope's chapel having remained nominally the same, and consequently being really much diminished, while the opera was rising in estimation and good singers obtained premiums, before unknown, the Sixtine chapel has gradually lost the talents it originally possessed.

The *Miserere*, which is performed there twice in passion-week, and which produces such an effect upon strangers, was composed, about two hundred years since, by Gregorio Allegri, a descendant of Antonio Allegri, better known by the name of Correggio. At the moment of its commencement, the pope and cardinals prostrate themselves. The light of the tapers illumines the representation of the last judgment, painted by Michael Angelo, on the wall with which the altar is connected. As the service proceeds, the tapers are extinguished, one after the other, and the impression produced by the figures of the damned, painted with terrific power by Michael Angelo, is increased in awfulness, when they are dimly seen by the pale light of the last tapers. When the service is on the point of concluding, the leader, who beats the time, renders it imperceptibly slower; the singers diminish the volume of their voices, and the sinner, confounded before the majesty of his God, and prostrated before his throne, seems to await in silence his final doom.

The sublime effect of this composition depends, as it appears, on the manner in which it is sung, and the place in which it is performed. There is a kind of traditional knowledge, by which the pope's singers are taught certain ways of managing their voices, so as to produce the greatest effect, and which it is impossible to express by notes. Their singing possesses all the qualities which render music affecting. The same melody is repeated to all the verses of the psalm, but the music, though similar in the masses, is not so in the details. It is accordingly easy to be understood, without being tiresome. The peculiarity of the Sixtine chapel, consists in accelerating or retarding the time in certain expressions, in

swelling or diminishing the voice according to the sense of the words, and in singing some of the verses with more animation than others.

The following anecdote will show still more clearly the difficulty of the exploit performed by Mozart in singing the *Miserere*.

It is related that the emperor Leopold I, who was not only fond of music, but was himself a good composer, requested of the pope, through his ambassador, a copy of the *Miserere* of Allegri, for the use of the imperial chapel at Vienna. The request was complied with, and the director of the Sistine chapel caused a copy to be written out, which was immediately transmitted to the emperor, who had in his service the first singers of the day.

Notwithstanding their talents, the *Miserere* of Allegri produced, at Vienna, no more effect than the dullest common chant, and the emperor and his court were persuaded that the pope's chapel-master, desirous of keeping the *Miserere* to himself, had eluded his master's orders, and sent an inferior composition. A courier was immediately despatched to complain to the pope of this want of respect, and the director was dismissed without being allowed to say a word in his own justification. The poor man, however, prevailed on one of the cardinals to intercede for him, and to represent to his holiness, that the manner of performing the *Miserere* could not be expressed in notes; but required much time, and repeated lessons from the singers of the chapel, who possessed the traditional knowledge of it. The pope, who knew nothing of music, could scarcely comprehend how the same notes should not be just as good at Vienna, as at Rome. He, however, allowed the poor chapel-master to write his defence to the emperor, and, in time, he was received again into favor.

It was this well-known anecdote, which occasioned the people of Rome to be so astonished when they heard a child sing their *Miserere*, correctly, after two lessons. Nothing is more difficult than to excite surprise in Rome, in any thing relating to the fine arts. The most brilliant reputation dwindles into insignificance in that celebrated city, where the finest productions of every art are the subjects of daily and familiar contemplation.

I know not whether it arose from the reputation which it procured him, but it appears that the solemn and affecting chant of the *Miserere* made a deep impression on the mind of Mozart, who showed, ever afterwards, a marked preference for Handel, and the tender Boccherini.

From Rome the Mozarts went to Naples, where Wolfgang played on the piano-forte at the *Conservatorio della Pietà*. When he was in the middle of his sonata, the audience took it into their heads, that there was a charm in the ring which he wore. It became necessary to explain to him the cause of the disturbance which arose, and he was at last obliged to take off this supposed magic circle. We may imagine the effect produced on such an auditory, when they found, that after the ring was taken off, the music was not the less beautiful. Wolfgang gave a second grand concert, at the house

of prince Kaunitz, the emperor's ambassador, and afterwards returned to Rome. The pope desired to see him, and conferred on him the cross and brevet of a knight of the Golden Spur. At Bologna, he was nominated, unanimously, member and master of the Philharmonic Academy. He was shut up alone, agreeably to usage, and in less than half an hour he composed an anthem for four voices.

Mozart's father hastened his return to Milan, that he might attend to the opera which he had undertaken. The time was advancing, and they did not reach that city till the close of October, 1770. Had it not been for this engagement, Mozart might have obtained what is considered in Italy the first musical honour, — the composition of a serious opera for the theatre of Rome.

On the 26th of December, the first representation of the *Mithridates* took place, at Milan. This opera, composed by Mozart, at the age of fourteen, was performed twenty nights in succession; a circumstance which sufficiently indicates its success. The manager immediately entered into a written agreement with him for the composition of the first opera for the year 1773. Mozart left Milan, which resounded with his fame, to pass the last days of the carnival at Venice, in company with his father. At Verona, which he only passed through, he was presented with a diploma, constituting him a member of the Philharmonic Society of that city. Wherever he went in Italy, he met with the most distinguished reception, and was generally known by the name of the Philharmonic Knight: *Il Cavaliere Filarmonico*.

When Mozart returned with his father to Salzburg, in March, 1771, he found a letter from Count Firmian, of Milan, who commanded him, in the name of the empress Maria Theresa, to compose a dramatic cantata on occasion of the marriage of the Archduke Ferdinand. The empress had chosen the celebrated Hasse, as the oldest professor, to write the opera, and she was desirous that the youngest composer should undertake the cantata, the subject of which was *Ascanius in Alba*. He undertook the work, and in the month of August, set out for Milan, where, during the solemnities of the marriage, the opera and the serenade were performed alternately.

In 1772, he composed for the election of the new archbishop of Salzburg, the cantata entitled *Il sogno di Scipione*; and at Milan, where he passed the winter of the year following, he wrote *Lucio Silla*, a serious opera, which had twenty-six successive representations. In the Spring of 1773, Mozart returned to Salzburg, and during some excursions which he made in the course of this year to Vienna and Munich, he produced various compositions of merit, as, *La Finta Giardiniera*, an opera buffa, two grand masses for the elector of Bavaria's chapel, &c. In 1775, the archduke Maximilian spent some time at Salzburg, and it was on this occasion that Mozart composed the cantata entitled *Il Re Pastore*.

The early part of the life of Mozart is the most extraordinary: the details of it may interest the philosopher, as well as the artist. We shall be more concise in our account of the remainder of his too short career.

Arrived at the age of nineteen, Mozart might flatter himself that he had attained the summit of his art, since of this he was repeatedly assured, wherever he went;—from London to Naples. As far as regarded the advancement of his fortune, he was at liberty to choose among all the capitals of Europe. Experience had taught him that he might everywhere reckon on general admiration. His father thought that Paris would suit him best, and, accordingly, in the month of September, 1777, he set out for that capital, accompanied by his mother only.

It would have been, unquestionably, very advantageous to him to have settled there, but the French music, of that time, did not accord with his taste; and the preference shown for vocal performances would have given him little opportunity of employing himself in the instrumental department. He had also the misfortune to lose his mother in the year after his arrival. From that time, Paris became insupportable to him. After having composed a symphony for the *Concert spirituel*, and a few other pieces, he hastened to rejoin his father in the beginning of 1779.

In the month of November, of the year following, he repaired to Vienna, whither he had been summoned by his sovereign, the archbishop of Salzburg. He was then in his twenty-fourth year. The habits of Vienna were very agreeable to him, and the beauty of its fair inhabitants, it appears, still more so. There he fixed himself, and nothing could ever prevail upon him afterwards to leave it. The empire of the passions having commenced in this being, so exquisitely sensible to his art, he soon became the favorite composer of his age, and gave the first example of a remarkable child becoming a great man.

To give a particular analysis of each of Mozart's works would be too long, and too difficult; an amateur ought to know them all. Most of his operas were composed at Vienna, and had the greatest success, but none of them was a greater favorite than the *Zauber-Flöte*, which was performed one hundred times in less than a year.

Like Raphael, Mozart embraced his art in its whole extent. Raphael appears to have been unacquainted with one thing only, the mode of painting figures on a ceiling, in contracted proportion, or what is termed *fore-shortening*. He always supposes the canvas of the piece to be attached to the roof, or supported by allegorical figures.

As for Mozart, I am not aware of any department in which he has not excelled; operas, symphonies, songs, airs for dancing,—he is great in every thing. Haydn's friend, the Baron Von Swieten, went so far as to say, that, if Mozart had lived, he would have borne away the sceptre of instrumental music, even from that great master. In the comic opera

Mozart is deficient in gayety. In this respect he is inferior to Galuppi, Guglielmi, and Sarti.

The most remarkable circumstance in his music, independently of the genius displayed in it, is the novel way in which he employs the orchestra, especially the wind instruments. He draws surprising effects from the flute, an instrument of which Cimarosa hardly ever made any use. He enriches the accompaniment with all the beauties of the finest symphonies.

Mozart has been accused of taking interest only in his own music, and of being acquainted with none but his own works. This is the reproach of mortified vanity. Employed all his life in writing his own ideas, Mozart had not, it is true, time to read all those of other masters. But he readily expressed his approbation of whatever he met with that possessed merit, even the simplest air, provided it was original; though, less politic than the great artists of Italy, he had no consideration for mediocrity.

He most esteemed Porpora, Durante, Leo, and Alessandro Scarlatti, but he placed Handel above them all. He knew the principal works of that great master by heart. He was accustomed to say; "Handel knows best of all of us what is capable of producing a great effect. When he chooses, he strikes like the thunder-bolt."

He remarked of Jomelli, "This artist shines, and will always shine, in certain departments; but he should have confined himself to them, and not have attempted to write sacred music in the ancient style." He had not much opinion of Vincenzo Martini, whose *Cosa rara* was at that time much in favor. "There are some very pretty things in it," said he, "but, twenty years hence, nobody will think of it."

We possess nine operas composed by Mozart to Italian words: *La Finta Semplice*, comic opera, his first essay in the dramatic department: *Mithridates*, serious opera: *Lucio Silla*, serious opera: *La Giardiniera*, comic opera: *Idomeneo*, serious opera: *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *Don Giovanni*, composed in 1787: *Così fan tutte*, comic opera: and *La Clemenza di Tito*, an opera of Metastasio, which was performed, for the first time, in 1792.

He wrote only three German operas, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Der Schauspieldirector*, and *Die Zauber-Flöte*, in 1792.

He has left seventeen symphonies, and instrumental pieces of all kinds.

Mozart was also one of the first piano-forte players in Europe. He played with extraordinary rapidity; the execution of his left hand, especially, was greatly admired.

As early as the year 1785, Haydn said to Mozart's father, who was then at Vienna: "I declare to you, before God, and on my honour, that I regard your son as the greatest composer I ever heard of."

Such was Mozart in music. To those acquainted with human nature, it will not appear surprising, that a man, whose talents in this department were the object of general admiration, should not appear to equal advantage in the other situations of life.

Mozart possessed no advantages of person, though his parents were noted for their beauty. Cabanis remarks, that

“Sensibility may be compared to a fluid, the total quantity of which is determined; and which, whenever it flows more abundantly in any one channel, is proportionably diminished in the others.”

Mozart never reached his natural growth. During his whole life, his health was delicate. He was thin and pale: and though the form of his face was unusual, there was nothing striking in his physiognomy, but its extreme variableness. The expression of his countenance changed every moment, but indicated nothing more than the pleasure or pain which he experienced at the instant. He was remarkable for a habit, which is usually the attendant of stupidity. His body was perpetually in motion; he was either playing with his hands, or beating the ground with his foot. There was nothing extraordinary in his other habits, except his extreme fondness for the game of billiards. He had a table in his house, on which he played every day by himself, when he had not any one to play with. His hands were so habituated to the piano, that he was rather clumsy in every thing beside. At table, he never carved, or if he attempted to do so, it was with much awkwardness, and difficulty. His wife usually undertook that office.

The same man, who, from his earliest age, had shown the greatest expansion of mind in what related to his art, in other respects remained always a child. He never knew how properly to conduct himself. The management of domestic affairs, the proper use of money, the judicious selection of his pleasures, and temperance in the enjoyment of them, were never virtues to his taste. The gratification of the moment was always uppermost with him. His mind was so absorbed by a crowd of ideas, which rendered him incapable of all serious reflection, that, during his whole life, he stood in need of a guardian to take care of his temporal affairs. His father was well aware of his weakness in this respect, and it was on this account that he persuaded his wife to follow him to Paris, in 1777, his engagements not allowing him to leave Salzburg himself.

But this man, so absent, so devoted to trifling amusements, appeared a being of a superior order as soon as he sat down to a piano-forte. His mind then took wing, and his whole attention was directed to the sole object for which nature designed him, *the harmony of sounds*. The most numerous orchestra did not prevent him from observing the slightest false note, and he immediately pointed out, with surprising precision, by what instrument the fault had been committed, and the note which should have been made.

When Mozart went to Berlin, he arrived late in the evening. Scarcely had he alighted, when he asked the waiter of the inn, whether there was any opera that evening. “Yes, the *Entführung aus dem Serail*.” “That is charming!” He immediately set out for the theatre, and placed himself at

the entrance of the pit, that he might listen without being observed. But, sometimes, he was so pleased with the execution of certain passages, and at others, so dissatisfied with the manner, or the time, in which they were performed, or with the embellishments added by the actors, that, continually expressing either his pleasure, or disapprobation, he insensibly got up to the bar of the orchestra. The manager had taken the liberty of making some alterations in one of the airs. When they came to it, Mozart, unable to restrain himself any longer, called out, almost aloud, to the orchestra, in what way it ought to be played. Everybody turned to look at the man in a great coat, who was making all this noise. Some persons recognised Mozart, and, in an instant, the musicians and actors were informed that he was in the theatre. Some of them, and amongst the number a very good female singer, were so agitated at the intelligence, that they refused to come again upon the stage. The manager informed Mozart of the embarrassment he was in. He immediately went behind the scenes, and succeeded, by the compliments which he paid to the actors, in prevailing upon them to go on with the piece.

Music was his constant employment, and his most gratifying recreation. Never, even in his earliest childhood, was persuasion required to engage him to go to his piano. On the contrary, it was necessary to take care that he did not injure his health by his application. He was particularly fond of playing in the night. If he sat down to the instrument at nine o'clock in the evening, he never left it before midnight, and even then it was necessary to force him away from it, for he would have continued to modulate, and play voluntaries, the whole night. In his general habits he was the gentlest of men, but the least noise during the performance of music offended him violently. He was far above that affected or misplaced modesty, which prevents many performers from playing till they have been repeatedly entreated. The nobility of Vienna often reproached him with playing, with equal interest, before any persons that took pleasure in hearing him.

An amateur, in a town through which Mozart passed in one of his journeys, assembled a large party of his friends, to give them an opportunity of hearing this celebrated musician. Mozart came, agreeably to his engagement, said very little, and sat down to the piano-forte. Thinking that none but connoisseurs were present, he began a slow movement, the harmony of which was sweet, but extremely simple, intending by it to prepare his auditors for the sentiment which he designed to introduce afterwards. The company thought all this very common-place. The style soon became more lively; they thought it pretty enough. It became severe, and solemn, of a striking, elevated, and more difficult harmony. Some of the ladies began to think it quite tiresome, and to whisper a few criticisms to one another; soon, half the party were talking. The master of the house

was upon thorns, and Mozart himself at last perceived how little his audience were affected by the music. He did not abandon the principal idea with which he commenced, but he developed it with all the fire of which he was capable; still he was not attended to. Without leaving off playing, he began to remonstrate rather sharply with his audience, but as he fortunately expressed himself in Italian, scarcely anybody understood him. They became however more quiet. When his anger was a little abated, he could not himself forbear laughing at his impetuosity. He gave a more common turn to his ideas, and concluded with playing a well-known air, of which he gave ten or twelve charming variations. The whole room was delighted, and very few of the company were at all aware of what had passed. Mozart, however, soon took leave, inviting the master of the house, and a few connoisseurs, to spend the evening with him at his inn. He detained them to supper, and, upon their intimating a wish to hear him play, he sat down to the instrument, where, to their great astonishment, he forgot himself till after midnight.

An old harpsichord tuner came to put some strings to his travelling piano-forte. "Well, my good old fellow," says Mozart to him, "what do I owe you? I leave to-morrow." The poor man, regarding him as a sort of deity, replied, stammering and confounded, "Imperial Majesty! . . . Mr. the *maître de Chapelle* of his imperial majesty! . . . I cannot . . . It is true that I have waited upon you several times. . . . You shall give me a crown." "A crown!" replied Mozart, "a worthy fellow, like you, ought not to be put out of his way for a crown," and he gave him some ducats. The honest man, as he withdrew, continued to repeat, with low bows, "Ah! Imperial Majesty!"

Of his operas, he esteemed most highly the *Idomeneus*, and *Don Juan*. He was not fond of talking of his own works; or, if he mentioned them, it was in a few words. Of *Don Juan* he said, one day, "This opera was not composed for the public of Vienna, it is better suited to Prague; but, to say the truth, I wrote it only for myself, and my friends."

The time which he most willingly employed in composition, was the morning, from six or seven o'clock till ten, when he got up. After this, he did no more for the rest of the day, unless he had to finish a piece that was wanted. He always worked very irregularly. When an idea struck him, he was not to be drawn from it. If he was taken from the piano-forte, he continued to compose in the midst of his friends, and passed whole nights with his pen in his hand. At other times, he had such a disinclination to work, that he could not complete a piece till the moment of its performance. It once happened, that he put off some music which he had engaged to furnish for a court concert, so long, that he had not time to write out the part which he was to perform himself. The emperor Joseph, who was peeping everywhere, happening to cast his eyes on the sheet which Mozart seemed to be playing from, was surprised to see nothing but

empty lines, and said to him: "Where's your part?" "Here," replied Mozart, putting his hand to his forehead.

The same circumstance nearly occurred with respect to the overture of *Don Juan*. It is generally esteemed the best of his overtures; yet it was only composed the night previous to the first representation, after the general rehearsal had taken place. About eleven o'clock in the evening, when he retired to his apartment, he desired his wife to make him some punch, and to stay with him, in order to keep him awake. She accordingly began to tell him fairy tales, and odd stories, which made him laugh till the tears came. The punch, however, made him so drowsy, that he could only go on while his wife was talking, and dropped asleep as soon as she ceased. The efforts which he made to keep himself awake, the continual alternation of sleep and watching, so fatigued him, that his wife persuaded him to take some rest, promising to awake him in an hour's time. He slept so profoundly, that she suffered him to repose for two hours. At five o'clock in the morning she awoke him. He had appointed the music copiers to come at seven, and, by the time they arrived, the overture was finished. They had scarcely time to write out the copies necessary for the orchestra, and the musicians were obliged to play it without a rehearsal. Some persons pretend, that they can discover in this overture the passages where Mozart dropped asleep, and those where he suddenly awoke again.

Don Juan had no great success at Vienna at first. A short time after the first representation, it was talked of in a large party, at which most of the connoisseurs of the capital, and amongst others Haydn, were present. Mozart was not there. Everybody agreed that it was a very meritorious performance, brilliant in imagination, and rich in genius; but every one had also some fault to find with it. All had spoken, except the modest Haydn. His opinion was asked. "I am not," said he, with his accustomed caution, "a proper judge of the dispute: all that I know is, that Mozart is the greatest composer now existing." The subject was then changed.

Mozart, on his part, had also a great regard for Haydn. He has dedicated to him a set of quartetts, which may be classed with the best productions of the kind. A professor of Vienna, who was not without merit, though far inferior to Haydn, took a malicious pleasure in searching the compositions of the latter, for all the little inaccuracies which might have crept into them. He often came to show Mozart symphonies, or quartetts, of Haydn's, which he had put into score, and in which he had, by this means, discovered some inadvertences of style. Mozart always endeavoured to change the subject of conversation: at last, unable any longer to restrain himself, "Sir," said he to him, sharply, "if you and I were both melted down together, we should not furnish materials for one Haydn."

A painter, who was desirous of flattering Cimarosa, said to him once that he considered him superior to Mozart. "I, Sir," replied he smartly;

"what would you say to a person who should assure you that you were superior to Raphael?"

Mozart judged his own works with impartiality, and often with a severity, which he would not easily have allowed in another person. The emperor Joseph II was fond of Mozart, and had appointed him his chapel-master; but this prince pretended to be a *dilettante*. His travels in Italy had given him a partiality for the music of that country, and the Italians who were at his court did not fail to keep up this preference, which, I must confess, appears to me to be well founded.

These men spoke of Mozart's first essays with more jealousy than fairness, and the emperor, who scarcely ever judged for himself, was easily carried away by their decisions. One day, after hearing the rehearsal of a comic opera (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), which he had himself demanded of Mozart, he said to the composer: "My dear Mozart, that is too fine for my ears; there are too many notes there." "I ask your majesty's pardon," replied Mozart, dryly; "there are just as many notes as there should be." The emperor said nothing, and appeared rather embarrassed by the reply; but when the opera was performed, he bestowed on it the greatest encomiums.

Mozart was himself less satisfied with this piece afterwards, and made many corrections and retrenchments in it. He said, in playing on the piano-forte one of the airs which had been most applauded; "This is very well for the parlour, but it is too verbose for the theatre. At the time I composed this opera, I took delight in what I was doing, and thought nothing too long."

Mozart was not at all selfish; on the contrary, liberality formed the principal feature of his character. He often gave without discrimination, and, still more frequently, expended his money without discretion.

During one of his visits to Berlin, the king, Frederic William, offered him an appointment of 3,000 crowns a year, if he would remain at his court, and take upon him the direction of his orchestra. Mozart made no other reply, than "Shall I leave my good emperor?" Yet, at that time, Mozart had no fixed establishment at Vienna. One of his friends blaming him afterwards for not having accepted the king of Prussia's proposals, he replied: "I am fond of Vienna, the emperor treats me kindly, and I care little about money."

Some vexatious intrigues, which were excited against him at court, occasioned him, nevertheless, to request his dismissal; but a word from the emperor, who was partial to the composer, and especially to his music, immediately changed his resolution. He had not art enough to take advantage of this favorable moment, to demand a fixed salary; but the emperor himself, at length, thought of regulating his establishment. Unfortunately, he consulted on the subject a man who was not a friend to

Mozart. He proposed to give him 800 florins (about 100*l.*) and this sum was never increased. He received it as private composer to the emperor, but he never did any thing in this capacity. He was once required, in consequence of one of the general government orders, frequent at Vienna, to deliver in a statement of the amount of his salary. He wrote, in a sealed note, as follows: "Too much for what I have done; too little for for what I could have done."

The music sellers, the managers of the theatres, and others, daily took advantage of his well-known disinterestedness. He never received any thing for the greater part of his compositions for the piano. He wrote them to oblige persons of his acquaintance, who expressed a wish to possess something in his own writing for their private use. In these cases he was obliged to conform to the degree of proficiency which those persons had attained; and this explains why many of his compositions for the harpsichord appear unworthy of him. Artaria, a music seller, at Vienna, and others of his brethren, found means to procure copies of these pieces, and published them without the permission of the author; or, at any rate, without making him any pecuniary acknowledgement.

One day, the manager of a theatre, whose affairs were in a bad state, and who was almost reduced to despair, came to Mozart, and made known his situation to him, adding, "You are the only man in the world who can relieve me from my embarrassment." "I," replied Mozart, "how can that be?" "By composing for me an opera to suit the taste of the description of people who attend my theatre. To a certain point you may consult that of the connoisseurs, and your own glory; but have a particular regard to that class of persons who are not judges of good music. I will take care that you shall have the poem shortly, and that the decorations shall be handsome; in a word, that every thing shall be agreeable to the present mode." Mozart, touched by the poor fellow's entreaties, promised to undertake the business for him. "What remuneration do you require?" asked the manager. "Why, it seems that you have nothing to give me," said Mozart; "but, that you may extricate yourself from your embarrassments, and that, at the same time, I may not altogether lose my labor, we will arrange the matter thus: You shall have the score, and give me what you please for it, on condition that you will not allow any copies to be taken. If the opera succeeds, I will dispose of it in another quarter." The manager, enchanted with this generosity, was profuse in his promises. Mozart immediately set about the music, and composed it agreeably to the instructions given him. The opera was performed; the house was always filled; it was talked of all over Germany, and was performed, a short time afterwards, on five or six different theatres, none of which had obtained their copies from the distressed manager.

On other occasions, he met only with ingratitude from those to whom he had rendered service, but nothing could extinguish his compassion for

the unfortunate. Whenever any distressed artists, who were strangers to Vienna, applied to him, in passing through the city, he offered them the use of his house and table, introduced them to the acquaintance of those persons whom he thought most likely to be of use to them, and seldom let them depart without writing for them *concertos*, of which he did not even keep a copy, in order that, being the only persons to play them, they might exhibit themselves to more advantage.

Mozart often gave concerts at his house on Sundays. A Polish count, who was introduced on one of these occasions, was delighted, as well as the rest of the company, with a piece of music for five instruments, which was performed for the first time. He expressed to Mozart how much he had been gratified by it, and requested that, when he was at leisure, he would compose for him a trio for the flute. Mozart promised to do so on condition that it should be at his own time. The count, on his return home, sent the composer 100 gold demi-sovereigns, (about 100*l.*) with a very polite note, in which he thanked him for the pleasure he had enjoyed. Mozart sent him the original score of the piece for five instruments, which had appeared to please him. The count left Vienna. A year afterwards he called again upon Mozart, and inquired about his trio. "Sir," replied the composer, "I have never felt myself in a disposition to write any thing that I should esteem worthy of your acceptance." "Probably," replied the count, "you will not feel more disposed to return me the 100 demi-sovereigns, which I paid you beforehand for the piece." Mozart, indignant, immediately returned him his sovereigns; but the count said nothing about the original score of the piece for five instruments; and it was soon afterwards published by Artaria, as a quatuor for the harpsichord, with an accompaniment for the violin, alto, and violoncello.

It has been remarked, that Mozart very readily acquired new habits. The health of his wife, whom he always passionately loved, was very delicate. During a long illness which she had, he always met those who came to see her, with his finger on his lips, as an intimation to them not to make a noise. His wife recovered, but, for a long time afterwards, he always went to meet those who came to visit him with his finger on his lips, and speaking in a subdued tone of voice.

In the course of this illness, he occasionally took a ride on horseback, early in the morning; but, before he went, he was always careful to lay a paper near his wife, in the form of a physician's prescription. The following is a copy of one of these: "Good morning, my love; I hope you have slept well, and that nothing has disturbed you: be careful not to take cold, or to hurt yourself in stooping: do not vex yourself with the servants: avoid everything that would be unpleasant to you, till I return: take good care of yourself: I shall return at nine o'clock."

Constance Weber was an excellent companion for Mozart, and often gave him useful advice. She bore him two children, whom he tenderly

loved. His income was considerable, but his immoderate love of pleasure, and the disorder of his affairs, prevented him from bequeathing any thing to his family, except the celebrity of his name, and the attention of the public. After the death of this great composer, the inhabitants of Vienna testified to his children, their gratitude for the pleasure which their father had so often afforded them.

During the last years of Mozart's life, his health, which had always been delicate, declined rapidly. Like all persons of imagination, he was timidly apprehensive of future evils, and the idea that he had not long to live, often distressed him. At these times, he worked with such rapidity, and unremitting attention, that he sometimes forgot every thing that did not relate to his art. Frequently, in the height of this enthusiasm, his strength failed him, he fainted, and was obliged to be carried to his bed. Every one saw that he was ruining his health by this immoderate application. His wife and his friends did all they could to divert him. Out of complaisance, he accompanied them in the walks and visits to which they took him, but his thoughts were always absent. He was only occasionally roused from this silent and habitual melancholy, by the presentiment of his approaching end, an idea which always awakened in him fresh terror.

His insanity was similar to that of Tasso, and to that which rendered Rousseau so happy in the valley of Charmettes, by leading him, through the fear of approaching death, to the only true philosophy, the enjoyment of the present moment and the forgetting of sorrow. Perhaps, without that high state of nervous sensibility which borders on insanity, there is no superior genius in the arts which require tenderness of feeling.

His wife, uneasy at these singular habits, invited to the house those persons whom he was most fond of seeing, and who pretended to surprise him, at times when, after many hours' application, he ought naturally to have thought of resting. Their visits pleased him, but he did not lay aside his pen; they talked, and endeavoured to engage him in the conversation, but he took no interest in it; they addressed themselves particularly to him, he uttered a few inconsequential words, and went on with his writing.

This extreme application, it may be observed, sometimes accompanies genius, but is by no means a proof of it. Who can read Thomas's emphatic collection of superlatives? Yet this writer was so absorbed in his meditations on the means of being eloquent, that once, at Montmorency, when his footman brought him the horse on which he usually rode out, he offered the animal a pinch of snuff. Raphael Mengs also, in the present age, was remarkable for absence, yet he is only a painter of the third order; while Guido, who was always at the gaming table, and who, towards the conclusion of his life, painted as many as three pictures in a day, to pay the debts of the night, has left behind him works, the least

valuable of which is more pleasing than the best of Mengs, or of Carlo Maratti, both of them men of great application.

A lady once said to me, "Mr. — tells me that I shall reign for ever in his heart; that I shall be sole mistress of it. Assuredly I believe him, but what signifies it, if his heart itself does not please me?" Of what use is the application of a man without genius? Mozart has been, in the eighteenth century, perhaps the most striking example of the union of the two. Benda, the author of "*Ariadne in the Isle of Naxos*," has also long fits of absence.

It was in this state of mind that he composed the *Zauber-Flöte*, the *Clemenza di Tito*, the *Requiem*, and some other pieces of less celebrity. It was while he was writing the music of the first of these operas, that he was seized with the fainting fits we have mentioned. He was very partial to the *Zauber-Flöte*, though he was not quite satisfied with some parts of it, to which the public had taken a fancy, and which were incessantly applauded. This opera was performed many times, but the weak state in which Mozart then was, did not permit him to direct the orchestra, except during nine or ten of the first representations. When he was no longer able to attend the theatre, he used to place his watch by his side, and seemed to follow the orchestra in his thoughts. "Now the first act is over," he would say, "now they are singing such an air," &c.; then, the idea would strike him afresh, that he must soon bid adieu to all this for ever.

The effect of this fatal tendency of mind was accelerated by a very singular circumstance. I beg leave to be permitted to relate it in detail, because we are indebted to it for the famous *Requiem*, which is justly considered one of Mozart's best productions.

One day, when he was plunged in a profound reverie, he heard a carriage stop at his door. A stranger was announced, who requested to speak to him. A person was introduced, handsomely dressed, of dignified and impressive manners. "I have been commissioned, Sir, by a man of considerable importance, to call upon you." "Who is he?" interrupted Mozart. "He does not wish to be known." "Well, what does he want?" "He has just lost a person whom he tenderly loved, and whose memory will be eternally dear to him. He is desirous of annually commemorating this mournful event by a solemn service, for which he requests you to compose a *Requiem*." Mozart was forcibly struck by this discourse, by the grave manner in which it was uttered, and by the air of mystery in which the whole was involved. He engaged to write the *Requiem*. The stranger continued, "Employ all your genius on this work; it is destined for a connoisseur." "So much the better." "What time do you require?" "A month." "Very well; in a month's time I shall return. What price do you set on your work?" "A hundred ducats." The stranger counted them on the table, and disappeared.

Mozart remained lost in thought for some time; he then suddenly

called for pen, ink, and paper, and, in spite of his wife's entreaties, began to write. This rage for composition continued several days; he wrote day and night, with an ardor which seemed continually to increase; but his constitution, already in a state of great debility, was unable to support this enthusiasm: one morning he fell senseless, and was obliged to suspend his work. Two or three days after, when his wife sought to divert his mind from the gloomy presages which occupied it, he said to her abruptly: "It is certain that I am writing this *Requiem* for myself; it will serve for my funeral service." Nothing could remove this impression from his mind.

As he went on, he felt his strength diminish from day to day, and the score advanced slowly. The month which he had fixed being expired, the stranger again made his appearance. "I have found it impossible," said Mozart, "to keep my word." "Do not give yourself any uneasiness," replied the stranger; "what further time do you require?" "Another month. The work has interested me more than I expected, and I have extended it much beyond what I at first designed." "In that case, it is but just to increase the premium; here are fifty ducats more." "Sir," said Mozart, with increasing astonishment, "who, then, are you?" "That is nothing to the purpose; in a month's time I shall return."

Mozart immediately called one of his servants, and ordered him to follow this extraordinary personage, and find out who he was; but the man failed for want of skill, and returned without being able to trace him.

Poor Mozart was then persuaded that he was no ordinary being; that he had a connexion with the other world, and was sent to announce to him his approaching end. He applied himself with the more ardor to his *Requiem*, which he regarded as the most durable monument of his genius. While thus employed, he was seized with the most alarming fainting fits; but the work was at length completed before the expiration of the month. At the time appointed, the stranger returned, but Mozart was no more.

His career was as brilliant as it was short. He died before he had completed his thirty-sixth year; but in this short space of time he has acquired a name which will never perish, so long as feeling hearts are to be found.

MARIE CHARLOTTE CORDAY D'ARMONT

1768-1793

By JULES MICHELET¹ (1798)



ON SUNDAY July 7th, 1793, the drums rolled on the vast green carpet of the plain at Caen, and there came together the volunteers who set forth on their march toward Paris to engage in the so-called "Marat War." There were just thirty of these volunteers, and the fair ladies and deputies who met there were surprised and chagrined at the meagre force. There was one young lady, among others, who appeared especially grieved: this was Mlle. Marie Charlotte Corday d'Armont, a beautiful young creature, a Republican of noble but poor family, then residing at Caen. Pétion, who had seen her occasionally, assumed that she had come to the plain that morning to see her lover, whose impending departure rendered her sad. He rallied her rather facetiously. "You would be sorry, indeed," said he, "if they did not go?"

This cynical Girondin, who had seen so much in the world, could not understand the pure motive and the ardent flame that possessed the heart of the young girl. He who knew only the empty speeches and phrase-making of world-weary men, could not know that to her her words were matters of destiny, of life and death. On that vast field at Caen, that could easily have held a hundred thousand men, but now held no more than thirty, she realized what no one else realized: that her Fatherland had been abandoned.

Since the men were doing so little, she believed that a woman's help was necessary.

Mlle. Corday belonged to the high nobility; she was of the family of Corneille's heroines — Chimène, Pauline and Horace's sister. She was actually a great grand-niece of the author of *Cinna*. The sublime was part of her temperament. In the last letter she ever wrote, she expressed her most ardent desires. All is said in the constant repetition of the word "Peace, Peace!"

At once sublime and a creature of reason — in the Norman fashion like her ancestor, — she reasoned in this way: Law is peace. Who killed the Law of June 2nd? Marat, before all others. Once the murderer of that Law is killed, peace will again flourish. The death of one man will give life to all the rest.

¹ Translated from the French, for this collection, by Barrett H. Clark. Originally appeared in *Les Femmes de la Révolution*, Paris, 1854.

Thus she reasoned. She gave no thought to her own life — that was her gift.

An idea, a single purpose, as noble as it was determined. Everything centered in one man; in cutting short the thread of that life, she believed she would with one clean, honest gesture cut the thread that bound the ill-starred destiny of all people; it would be as simple as snipping off the thread of her spindle.

You must not think of Mlle. Corday as a wild virago to whom the shedding of human blood was a matter of no account. On the contrary, it was in order to prevent bloodshed that she had decided to strike her blow. She believed she was going to save a whole people by exterminating an exterminator. She had the soft and tender heart of a woman. What she had taken upon herself was an act of pity. You feel her soft sweetness in the one existing portrait of her, made as she was on the point of death. There is nothing in it to suggest the bloody deed associated with her name. It shows the face of a young Norman lady, a virgin in the full bloom of her maidenhood. She seems much younger than her twenty-five years. You can almost imagine hearing her slightly child-like voice speak the very words she wrote to her father, tinged with a Norman drawl: "I ask your forgiveness, Papa —."

In this tragic portrait she seems absolutely composed, reasonable, serious, like the other women of her part of the country. Does she look with indifference upon her fate? By no means. There is not a touch of false heroism. And remember, as she looks upon us, she was to meet the supreme test in half an hour. Is there no sign of the sulking child? Possibly; look well, and you may detect the trace of a slight move on that lip, just a suspicion. Yet so little resentful of the approach of death! Against the barbarous enemy about to cut short her sweet life — with so many possible romances and so much love in store for her! You are taken aback, seeing her so charmingly resigned. The heart seems to stop beating, tears spring to the eyes. You must turn aside from this portrait.

The painter has seized upon and depicted a moment of desperation, and transmitted to us a regret that will last for all time. No one looks upon this picture without feeling, "I was born too late! How deeply I could have loved her!" Her ash-colored hair is full of soft light. She wears a white bonnet and a white dress. Are these a symbol, a justification as it were of her innocence? I cannot say. In her eyes are doubt and sadness. She is not saddened by her destiny. Perhaps by her deed? Even in the strongest of those who commit an act like hers, no matter what their faith, we often see strange doubts arise before them at the last moments.

Look again into her sad soft eyes; you feel something besides, something that perhaps explains her destiny. She had always been alone.

That is indeed the one thing about her that is not altogether reassuring. In this creature compounded of what was good and lovely, there dwelt that sinis-

ter force, the Demon of Solitude. She knew no mother; hers died too early for the child to learn the meaning of maternal tenderness. She was deprived of that love which none but a mother can give. To all intents and purposes, she had no father. Hers was a poor nobleman, of an impractical and romantic turn, who spent his time writing against the abuses that supported his class, much more concerned with his books than with his children. And it might almost be said that she had no brothers. Both of hers differed so far in their ideas from the ideas that were dear to her, that in 1792 they joined the army of Condé.

When she was received into the convent of the Abbaye-aux-Dames at Caen — an institution for the daughters of the impoverished nobility — was she not still alone? There is little doubt, when one stops to consider to what an extent, in such places (which ought to be veritable sanctuaries of Christian equality) the rich look down upon the poor. There was, it seems, no place better suited to preserve the traditions of caste pride than this convent. Originally founded by Mathilde, wife of William the Conqueror, the building dominates the city; with its Romanesque vaults, built one over the other, it is the perfect expression of feudal insolence.

Charlotte's heart first sought refuge in religious devotion, and in the tender friendships of the convent. She was especially devoted to two young ladies, poor and of noble birth like herself. There she also caught her first glimpse of the outside world, for a most worldly set of young people were allowed to frequent the drawing-room and the Mother Superior's parlors. No doubt the frivolity of these people helped strengthen the determination of Mlle. Corday to retire from the world, and gave her a desire for solitude.

Her real friends were her books. The philosophical ideas of the century had penetrated into the convents, and the girl's reading was haphazard. She read Raynal and Rousseau indiscriminately. "Her brain," said one journalist, "was a jumble of all sorts of reading-matter."

She was one of those who can read books of all kinds without being in the least corrupted by them. Knowing well what is right as well as what is wrong, she preserved a singular, an almost childlike moral purity, which was apparent in the intonations of a silvery voice that sounded almost like a child's; one could feel instinctively that the girl who spoke belonged entirely to herself. It was perhaps possible to forget the features of Mlle. Corday, but never her voice. Someone who heard her speak once at Caen, casually, testified ten years later that he could recall it perfectly.

This prolongation of childhood into young womanhood was a characteristic likewise of Jeanne d'Arc, who remained a little girl to the end, having never actually been a woman.

What before all else made Mlle. Corday an unforgettable figure was that her childlike voice was combined with a grave personal beauty,

virile in its expression, though delicate in the features. This contrast produced a twofold effect; it attracted and at the same time it commanded respect. You looked and were drawn toward her, but at once there was something that intimidated you; there was something in her expression that partook of immortality. She seemed ardently to desire it; seemed already to be living in the Elysium of Plutarch, among those who had given their lives that they might live everlastingly.

The Girondins had absolutely no effect upon her. Most of them had indeed ceased to be even themselves. She twice saw Barbaroux — then a deputy from Provence — in order to secure a letter and to plead on behalf of a woman friend of hers, member of a Provençal family. She had also seen Fanchet, Bishop of Calvados. She had little affection or esteem for him, regarding him as an immoral churchman. It is hardly necessary to add that Mlle. Corday knew no priests, nor ever went to confession.

When the convents were suppressed, her father had married again; she therefore found a home in Caen with her aged aunt, Mme. Breteville. It was there that she made her great resolution.

Had she done this without hesitation? By no means. At one time she was held back out of consideration for that aunt, who, from the goodness of her heart had taken her in. Would not such a deed seriously embarrass the aged lady? Her aunt surprised her with tears in her eyes one day. "I am weeping," said Mlle. Corday, "for France, for my family, for you. So long as Marat is alive, which of us is sure to live?"

Before going away she gave away her books, all but a volume of Plutarch which she took with her. In the courtyard she met by chance the child of a workingman who lived in the same house. She gave the child her drawing book, kissed her, and brushed her cheek with a tear.

Two tears in all! Quite enough to satisfy the demands of nature. Charlotte Corday could not take leave of life without first going to see her father. She saw him at Argentan, where she received his blessing. Thence she proceeded to Paris, in the public conveyance, riding in company with several Montagnards, great admirers of Marat. It was not long before they made up to her and even asked her hand in marriage. She pretended to be asleep, smiled, and played with a child.

She reached Paris on Thursday, the 11th, about noon, and went to stay at the Hôtel de la Providence, 17 rue des Vieux-Augustins. Being excessively tired, she went to bed at five in the afternoon, and until late the next morning slept the sleep of a young girl whose conscience is at peace. Her sacrifice had already been made, her deed accomplished — in her mind: she doubted no longer.

She was so thoroughly determined that she saw no need of haste in carrying out her design. She quietly discharged a debt of friendship, which was the pretext of her journey to Paris. At Caen she had obtained a letter from Barbaroux to his colleague Duperret. She declared that she desired

through him to get from the Ministry of the Interior certain documents necessary to her friend, Mlle. Forbin, who was an *émigrée*.

When she called next morning Duperret had gone to a sitting of the Convention. She returned to her room, and spent the day quietly reading Plutarch's *Lives*, that Bible of the strong. In the evening she went again to see the deputy, and found him at supper, in the bosom of his family. He obligingly promised he would go with her on the following day. She felt qualms on seeing that family she was about to involve or compromise, and said to Duperret very earnestly: "Take my advice, and go to Caen. You must make your escape before tomorrow night." But that very night, possibly even when Charlotte was talking to him, Duperret was already on the proscribed list. Nonetheless he kept his word to the young lady, and next day took her to the Minister's office. But the Minister refused to see them, giving them to understand that, since they were both under suspicion, they could in no way help the *émigrée*.

Charlotte Corday returned to her room only to throw Duperret, who accompanied her, off the scent. She went out again immediately, and made her way to the Palais-Royal. In the garden, flooded with sunshine and full of the gaiety of happy throngs, she made her way through little children at play, to a dealer in cutlery, bought a new forty-sous knife with an ebony handle, and hid it under her scarf.

How was she to use the weapon, now that she had it? She would have liked to give an air of high solemnity to the execution of her design. She had already passed on Marat. Her first idea, conceived at Caen, pondered over and determined on even when she came to Paris, had been to have a dramatically striking stage setting. She wanted to deliver her blow on the Champ de Mars, in the sight of all people, before Heaven, during the celebration of the 14th of July. She would punish this king of anarchy on the anniversary of the downfall of Royalism. And she would indeed have carried out to the last detail — true descendant as she was of Corneille — the famous verses from *Cinna*: "Tomorrow he makes a sacrifice at the Capitol. He shall be the victim; let us here do justice for all the world, in the presence of the gods."

But the festival was postponed, and Mlle. Corday determined to punish Marat on the scene of his crimes, the very spot where, shattering the principle of national representation, he had dictated the vote of the Convention, designating those who were to be allowed to live, and those who were to die. She would have struck him at the very peak of the Mountain. But Marat was ill; he no longer attended the Assembly.

She had therefore to go to his home, seek him at his own fireside, making her way past those who kept strict watch over him. Painful as the idea might be, she would have to gain his confidence and then deceive him. This is the one thing that pained her, or caused her the slightest remorse.

Her first note to Marat remained unanswered. In her second can be noted a trace of impatience: it marked the development of her passion. She even tells him that she "will reveal certain secrets to him"; that she is "persecuted, unhappy." She does not scruple to deceive him by arousing a sense of pity in the man she had condemned to death as one who was pitiless — an enemy of mankind.

As a matter of fact she had no need of this device, for she never sent the letter.

At seven o'clock on the evening of July 13th, she left her room, took a public carriage at the Place des Victoires, and crossing the Pont-Neuf, reached the door of Marat's house, at number 20 Rue des Cordeliers (today No. 18, Rue de L'Ecole de Médecine), the large and gloomy house just next to the house at the corner, with the tower.

Marat lived on the darkest floor — the second — of that dark house; it was convenient for a journalist and popular tribune, whose home must necessarily be as public as the street. Messengers, sign-makers, employees continually coming and going with proofs, persons of all sorts were everlastingly about the place. Marat's rooms themselves were a series of queer contrasts, faithfully reflecting the spiritual dissonances that characterised the life and destiny of the man himself. The dark rooms facing the courtyard, filled with old furniture, dirty tables heaped with newspapers, reminded one of the melancholy abode of a day-laborer. If you made your way beyond these you would be surprised to come upon a little sitting-room overlooking the street, hung with blue and white damask — delicately, coquettishly tinted. The windows had silk curtains; a few porcelain vases here and there, which were usually filled with flowers. Clearly the room of a woman, a good woman, attentive and tender, solicitous on behalf of the man who had dedicated his life to an arduous task. Here was his sanctuary, his place of rest. This was the mystery of Marat's life — later revealed by his sister. He was not in his own home; indeed he had no home. "Marat did not support her [his sister Albertine says]. A wonderful woman, taking pity on his plight, knowing how he fled from cellar to cellar, concealed in her own home the Friend of the People, dedicating to him her entire fortune, and sacrificing her comfort and repose."

Among Marat's papers was found a written promise of marriage to Catherine Evrard. He had already married her, with the sun and nature as witnesses.

The poor woman, old before her time, lived in an agony of insecurity. She felt the presence of death ever hovering near Marat. She kept guard at the doors, stopping every one at the threshold who aroused her suspicions.

Mlle. Corday's face was far from awaking any suspicions in her heart: the modest appearance of this young lady from the provinces was re-

assuring. At a time when everything was a matter of extremes — when women were either loose, or cynical in manner — this young lady proclaimed her solid Norman origin; she obviously was not exploiting her beauty. Her lovely hair was bound with a green ribbon, and she wore one of those bonnets well-known to the women of Calvados, a modest affair, far less flamboyant than what was worn by the women of Caux. Contrary to the fashion of the epoch, and in spite of the warmth of a July day, she had covered her bosom with a silk fichu, tied securely behind her back. She had on a white silk dress, and no other luxurious decorations except what rightfully belongs to a modest woman, in this case simply the light lace facings of her bonnet that hung down over her cheeks.

There was no trace of pallor in her face; red cheeks; a voice strong with assurance. Not a sign of emotion.

With a firm step she walked through the outer entrance and passed quickly on without stopping at the porter's lodge, where she was vainly ordered to stop. She then underwent the inspection of Catherine who, on hearing the porter's shouts, had opened the door and was trying to bar Mlle. Corday's progress. By this time Marat himself had heard the alterations — as well as the silvery vibrant tones of the young lady's voice. He was not at all afraid of women, and though he was at that moment taking a bath, he gave peremptory orders that the visitor should be admitted. The room into which she was shown was small and dark. A soiled sheet wrapped round him, and the board on which he wrote held in front of him, Marat thrust through the door his head, his shoulders, and his right arm. His gray hair, covered with a handkerchief or napkin, his yellow skin and bony frame, his huge frog-like mouth — there was little to remind one that this creature was a man. But it is not surprising that the young lady scarcely looked at him. She had come on the pretext of giving him news about the situation in Normandy. He asked questions, and was particularly anxious for the names of the deputies who had escaped to Caen. As she gave the names he wrote them down. When this was done, he said to her: "Very well. In a week they will be sent to the guillotine."

These words gave her the final impulse, the ultimate motive for striking. Drawing the knife from the bosom of her dress, she plunged it up to the hilt, straight into Marat's heart. Coming from above, and with such tremendous force, the knife just grazed the clavicle, completely pierced one lung, opened an artery and released a torrent of blood.

"Help, my dear! God!", was all he could say before he died.

Catherine was the first to arrive. Then followed a police officer. They bound Charlotte, standing rigid and as though petrified, by the window. The officer threw a chair at her head, and then barricaded the door to prevent her escape. She did not move a muscle. Neighbors and several people who happened to be in the vicinity came in, attracted by the cries. A

surgeon was summoned, but when he arrived he pronounced the victim dead. Members of the National Guard came in and kept the crowd from tearing Charlotte to pieces. Her wrists were bound — a useless precaution, since she made no effort to move her hands. She looked about her with cold, disdainful eyes. A wigmaker of the neighborhood who had seized her knife, brandished it above his head and shouted. She paid no attention to him. There was one thing only that seemed to arouse her curiosity and pained her — as she said later — and that was the cries of Catherine Marat. It was she who first gave her this painful notion that “after all, Marat was a man.” She seemed to be saying to herself, “What! Someone loved him!”

A higher police officer arrived at a quarter to eight, then the police administrators Louvet and Marino, and later the deputies Maure, Chabot, Drouet, and Legendre, who had come direct from the Convention to see the “Monster.” They were astonished to find a fair young lady between two soldiers, who held her firmly by the hands. She answered all their questions quietly but with firmness and simplicity. She even admitted that she would have escaped if it had been possible. Such are the contradictions of nature. In a Proclamation to the French People which she had written beforehand and carried on her person, she stated that she wished to die in order that her head, carried about in Paris, might serve as a rallying standard for all who respected the laws.

There was another contradiction: she said and wrote that she hoped to die an unknown woman. And yet there were found on her her baptismal certificate and passport. The other things she carried with her indicated a complete tranquillity of mind; they were only such things as a careful woman requires. Besides her key and watch and money were a thimble and thread, with which to repair in prison the damage that her clothing would undoubtedly suffer while she was being arrested.

The trip to the Abbaye required scarcely two minutes. But it was beset with danger. The street was crowded with Marat’s friends, the furious Cordeliers, who wept and howled and demanded that the assassin should be delivered up to them. Charlotte had been prepared for everything, having resigned herself to any sort of death, except being torn to bits by a furious mob. She is said to have faltered for an instant. But the Abbaye was at last reached.

When she was again questioned the same night, by members of the Committee of Public Safety and other deputies, she showed not only firmness but even a touch of sprightliness. Legendre, full of self-importance and believing that he himself might have deserved the martyrdom suffered by Marat, said to her: “Was it not you who came to see me yesterday dressed like a nun?” “The citizen is mistaken,” she answered with a smile. “I did not consider either his life or his death a matter of any importance to the safety of the Republic.”

Chabot took possession of her watch, and kept it. "I thought," said Mlle. Corday, "that Capuchins had taken the vow of poverty!"

It was a great disappointment to Chabot and the others who cross-examined the girl that they could find nothing, either on her person or in her answers, to prove that she had been sent by the Girondins of Caen. At the examination held during the night Chabot still maintained that she had some paper concealed in the bosom of her dress; taking advantage of the fact that her hands were bound, he ventured to touch her. No doubt he would have managed to find what was not there: the Girondin manifesto. Hampered as she was, she was able to repulse him with some spirit; she recoiled so violently that the cords that bound her snapped, revealing for an instant the white firmness of her breast. The incident struck pity into the hearts of those present, and the prisoner was released in order to allow her to arrange her clothing, pull down her sleeves and slip on a pair of gloves under the chains that bound her wrists.

She was transferred on the morning of the 16th from the Abbaye to the Conciergerie, where she wrote a long letter to Barbaroux, evidently calculated by the lightness of its tone to prove the perfect tranquillity of her mind. This letter, which was certain of being circulated throughout all Paris the next day, was, despite the familiar form of its composition, in effect a sort of manifesto. In it she seeks to convey the idea that the volunteers at Caen were both ardent and numerous. She had not yet heard of the defeat at Vernon.

What seems to prove that she was less calm than she pretended to be, is her repeating four times the motive and the excuse of her crime: Peace, the desire for Peace. The letter bears the date "The Second Day of the Preparation for Peace." Toward the middle of the letter she writes: "Would that peace could be established as quickly as I wish it. I have enjoyed peace during the past two days. The happiness of my country is my happiness."

Then she wrote to her father asking his forgiveness for having herself disposed of her own life, and quotes this line:

"The crime is the shame, not the scaffold."

She wrote also to Doucet de Pontecoulant, nephew of the Mother Superior at Caen. He was a prudent Girondin, and Mlle. Corday chose him to defend her. But Doucet did not spend that night at home, and her letter never reached him.

If I can credit a precious note communicated to me by the family of the artist who painted her portrait in prison, she had had a special bonnet made to wear at the trial. This explains why she spent thirty-six francs during the very short period of her captivity.

Just how was she to be charged? The Paris authorities attributed her crime, in a proclamation, to the Federalists, saying that "This Fury

had come from the house of the ci-devant Count Dorset." Fouquier-Tinville wrote to the Committee of Public Safety that he "had just been informed that she was a friend of Belzunce, that she wished to avenge Belzunce, and his relative Biron, recently denounced by Marat; that Barbaroux had urged her on," and much else besides. An absurd story, to which he dared make no further reference in his charge.

The public was not mistaken, for everyone believed that she had acted on her own responsibility alone, depending on no counsels but those of her own courage, devotion, and fanaticism. The other prisoners in the Abbaye and Conciergerie, even the people in the streets (after the very first outcries), regarded her in silence and respectful admiration. "When she appeared in the courtroom," said her officious defender, Chauveau-Lagarde, "everyone, including the jury, the judges and spectators, seemed to regard Mlle. Corday as a judge who had summoned them to the Last Judgment. It might have been possible to paint her features or reproduce her words, but no art could depict the grandeur of her soul, which shone on her face. The effect created by her defense was one of those things which is instinctively felt, but cannot possibly be expressed."

Later he was to correct her answers which had been, as usual, softened, altered, and mutilated in the printed report of the *Moniteur*. Many of these are cast in the mould of the compact repartees of Corneille.

"Who was it who stimulated you to such hatred?"

"I needed the hatred of no one else: I had enough of my own."

"The deed must have been suggested by someone?"

"You carry out very badly what you have not yourself conceived."

"What did you hate in him?"

"His crimes."

"What do you mean by his crimes?"

"The terrible things he was doing to France."

"What could you hope to accomplish by killing him?"

"To restore peace to my country."

"Do you imagine you have killed all the Marats?"

"With this one dead, the others may perhaps be afraid to go on."

"How long had you been planning the deed?"

"Since the 31st of May, when the people's representatives were killed here."

Said the judge after the accusation had been made: "What have you to answer to this?"

"Nothing, except that I succeeded."

The truth of her statements was upheld on all points but one: she maintained that there were thirty thousand volunteers at Caen. She wished to inspire fear at Paris.

In many of her answers there is ample evidence that her spirit was by no means proof against natural emotions. She was not able to hear the

entire deposition of the sobbing wife of Marat. She interrupted with the words, "Yes, I killed him."

She also gave a start when they showed her the knife, turning her eyes away and making a gesture with her arm. Her voice trembled as she said, "Yes, I recognize it, I recognize it."

Fouquier-Tinville called attention to the fact that she struck the blow from above in order to be surer of its effect. Had it been otherwise the knife might have been stopped by one of Marat's ribs. He added, "Apparently you had had previous experience!"

"Monster!" cried Charlotte. "He thinks me an assassin!"

Chauveau-Lagarde tells us that this came like a thunderclap. The hearings were over, having lasted only half an hour.

Judge Montané wanted to save Mlle. Corday. He altered the question he was to address to the jury, asking only, "Did she commit the deed with premeditation?", suppressing the other half of the formula, "with criminal and anti-revolutionary intent?" Because of this the judge was himself arrested a few days later.

The judge and jury would have preferred the defense to plead insanity. The judge wished it in order to save her, the jury to humiliate her. The judge looked into her eyes and acted as she wished him to act, establishing the fact that the crime had been premeditated for a long time. He could say that the only defense she wished was to have no defense at all. He was a young man, and became deeply affected by the woman's courage, and dared risk the scaffold by publicly saying, "This steadfastness, this abnegation, sublime from one point of view," etc.

After her sentence, she was at her own request taken to the young lawyer, thanking him graciously for his generous and tactful defence. She wished to give him some token of her esteem. "These gentlemen," she said, "have just informed me that my property is confiscated. I owe something to the prison people, and ask you to discharge my debt."

Leaving the courtroom by the dark winding staircase and returning to her cell below, she smiled at the prisoners as she passed along the corridor, and made her excuses to the jailer, Richard, and his wife, with whom she had promised to take dinner. She was visited by a priest who offered her consolation, and politely showed him the door. "Thank those," she told him, "who sent you here."

During the trial she had noticed an artist trying to draw a portrait of her. He seemed to take an extraordinary interest in her, and she had turned toward him. After the trial she asked him to see her, and gave him the last hours of her life before being led to execution. The painter's name was Hauer; he was second in command of the Cordeliers' battalion. It was probably because of his rank that he was permitted to remain with the prisoner, with no other witness than a guard. She spoke quite calmly about various unimportant matters, as well as the events of the day, and

told him of her great spiritual peace. She asked Hauer to make a miniature of the portrait and send it to her family.

At the end of an hour and a half there came a gentle knock on the little door behind which she was sitting. It opened, and the executioner appeared. Turning toward him she caught sight of the scissors and the red shirt he was carrying. She could scarcely suppress a slight gesture of emotion, and said to him involuntarily, "So soon?" Then in full command of herself she turned to the painter:

"Monsieur, I don't know how to thank you for your kindness. I have only this to offer you. Keep it as a remembrance of me." She seized the executioner's scissors, cut a pretty lock of long hair which had escaped from under her bonnet, and gave it to Hauer. The guards and executioner were deeply moved.

The moment she climbed into the cart, while the crowd, excited both by fury and admiration saw the lovely victim in a shirt emerge from the low arcade of the Conciergerie, Nature herself seemed to ally herself with the passions of humanity, and a violent storm broke over Paris. It was of short duration, and seemed to fly on ahead of Mlle. Corday: when she came to the Pont-Neuf it slowly passed up the Rue Saint-Honoré. Then the sun came out again, for it was not yet seven o'clock in the evening, and the day was the 19th of July. The light cast on the girl's features by the red shirt gave them a strangely fantastic hue.

We are told that Robespierre, Danton and Desmoulins had stationed themselves somewhere along the street and watched her go by. She was the personification of Peace, yet a sort of symbol of a Revolutionary Nemesis. She stirred the hearts in the breasts of those bystanders and filled them with astonishment.

The serious-minded onlookers who followed her through to the end — men of letters, physicians, and the like — were impressed by something very unusual: as a rule the strongest of those who were condemned to die on the scaffold preserved their fortitude by assuming some sort of activity, either by singing patriotic songs or calling out daring messages to their enemies. Mlle. Corday displayed perfect tranquillity, grace and simple serenity. When she reached the place of execution she was a picture of majesty; she seemed transfigured in the light of that summer sunset.

A certain physician who had kept his eyes fastened upon her every moment, declares that she turned pale when she first caught sight of the guillotine, but an instant later the color returned to her cheeks, and she mounted the steps with assurance. She was once more the young girl when the executioner tore the fichu from her shoulders. With a sense of natural modesty she stepped forward of her own accord, as though to cut the matter short by going to meet her death.

As her head fell, one of Marat's followers — a carpenter, who was assisting the executioner — stooped, picked it up with a brutal movement, and

showing it to the assembled people, struck the face. A thrill of horror and a muttering spread over the entire square. Some say the cheeks of the head blushed. Doubtless this was an optical illusion, for the rays of the setting sun shone through the trees of the Champs-Élysées into the eyes of all.

The Commune of Paris, and the court as well, satisfied public indignation by throwing the culprit into prison.

In spite of the few jeers of the Marat sympathisers it was easy to see that the crowd was deeply moved to sorrow, as well as to admiration. Public sentiment can be measured by the tone of the *Chronique de Paris*, which even in those days of official control, published an almost unqualified eulogy of Charlotte Corday.

Many men were so deeply impressed by her death that they never quite recovered. We have already seen how the judge was affected, and to what extremes her youthful defender had gone to save her life. The painter Hauer was no less profoundly moved. The same year he exhibited his picture of Marat, perhaps by way of excusing himself for having painted Mlle. Corday, but his name was unknown at subsequent expositions. He seems to have given up painting.

The effect of Mlle. Corday's death was terrible. She made death attractive. The example of her intrepidity attracted others. Several persons who had caught sight of her gave themselves up to a kind of tragic voluptuousness, and sought to follow her into unknown worlds. A young German named Adam Lux, who had been sent to Paris to plead for the union of Mayence with France, published a pamphlet in which he asked to die that he might meet Charlotte Corday. This poor wretch, who had come to France full of enthusiasm, believing that to see the French Revolution actually in process of being, he would be present at the realization of the ideal of human regeneration, was unable to contemplate the premature death of that ideal. He did not understand the cruel tests which every such beginning must undergo. In his melancholy brain Charlotte Corday symbolized that liberty which was about to disappear. He saw her at the trial, and her admirable self-command touched him to the heart. He saw her again, majestic and queen-like, on the scaffold. She had come to him twice, as in a vision.

Then he took his own life.

"I had faith in her courage," he wrote, "but felt powerless when I saw her surrounded by howling mobs of people — that image of sweetness, her soft eyes shining amid the darkness, her tender and brave soul speaking through her eyes. This memory of her will live with me always. What deep feelings, bitter and sweet, hitherto unsuspected, has she given me! They support within me a love of the Patrie for which she wished to die, and which I in turn have adopted as my own. Let these people honor me by sending me to the guillotine, which has now become a veritable altar!"

The pure and simple soul of this mystic, who shudders at the thought of murder, adored Charlotte Corday.

"No doubt," he continues, "one has a right to kill a usurper or a tyrant, but Marat was neither."

His was a tender soul, in striking contrast with the violence of a great nation bent on wholesale assassination — like the Girondins, and even the Royalists. Their fury demanded a saint as victim, and a legend to follow. Charlotte was far different — becoming a different sort of legend and inspiring a different sort of poetry — from Louis XVI, who was, in a manner of speaking, a vulgar martyr, in whom the only interesting thing was his misfortune.

Out of Charlotte's blood a new religion arose: the religion of the poniard. André Chénier wrote a hymn to the new divinity:

*"Oh virtue! Oh Poniard, the one hope of the world,
That is thy sacred weapon!"*

This conception, written and rewritten in every age and in every land, was to appear again in the remotest corner of Europe, in Pushkin's *Hymn to the Poniard*.

The ancient patron of heroic murder, Brutus — a pale memory from the far-off days of antiquity — was again to be found, transformed into a new divinity, more powerful and seductive. Thenceforward the presiding genius to young men who dream of striking a blow for Liberty will be not Brutus, but the beautiful Charlotte, as she stood in the sinister splendor of her red mantle, under the bloody halo of the setting sun of a July day, and the first purple haze of evening.

JONATHAN SWIFT

1667-1745

By WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY¹ (1811-1863)



IN TREATING of the English humourists of the past age, it is of the men and of their lives, rather than of their books, that I ask permission to speak to you; and in doing so, you are aware that I cannot hope to entertain you with a merely humorous or facetious story. Harlequin without his mask is known to present a very sober countenance, and was himself, the story goes, the melancholy patient whom the doctor advised to go and see Harlequin — a man full of cares and perplexities like the rest of us, whose Self must always be serious to him, under whatever mask or disguise or uniform he presents it to the public. And as all of you here must needs be grave when you think of your own past and present, you will not look to find, in the histories of those whose lives and feelings I am going to try and describe to you, a story that is otherwise than serious, and often very sad. If Humour only meant laughter, you would scarcely feel more interest about humorous writers than about the private life of poor Harlequin just mentioned, who possesses in common with these the power of making you laugh. But the men regarding whose lives and stories your kind presence here shows that you have curiosity and sympathy, appeal to a great number of our other faculties, besides our mere sense of ridicule. The humorous writer professes to awaken and direct your love, your pity, your kindness — your scorn for untruth, pretention, imposture — your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy. To the best of his means and ability he comments on all the ordinary actions and passions of life almost. He takes upon himself to be the week-day preacher, so to speak. Accordingly, as he finds, and speaks, and feels the truth best, we regard him, esteem him — sometimes love him. And, as his business is to mark other people's lives and peculiarities, we moralise upon *his* life when he has gone — and yesterday's preacher becomes the text for to-day's sermon.

Of English parents, and of a good English family of clergymen, Swift was born in Dublin in 1667, seven months after the death of his father, who had come to practise there as a lawyer. The boy went to school at

¹ Reprinted from *The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*, etc. These papers were originally delivered as lectures in 1861.

Footnotes are omitted.

Kilkenny, and afterwards to Trinity College, Dublin, where he got a degree with difficulty, and was wild, and witty, and poor. In 1688, by the recommendation of his mother, Swift was received into the family of Sir William Temple, who had known Mrs. Swift in Ireland. He left his patron in 1694, and the next year took orders in Dublin. But he threw up the small Irish preferment which he got and returned to Temple, in whose family he remained until Sir William's death in 1699. His hopes of advancement in England failing, Swift returned to Ireland, and took the living of Laracor. Hither he invited Hester Johnson, Temple's natural daughter, with whom he had contracted a tender friendship while they were both dependents of Temple's. And with an occasional visit to England, Swift now passed nine years at home.

In 1709 he came to England, and, with a brief visit to Ireland, during which he took possession of his deanery of Saint Patrick, he now passed five years in England, taking the most distinguished part in the political transactions which terminated with the death of Queen Anne. After her death, his party disgraced, and his hopes of ambition over, Swift returned to Dublin, where he remained twelve years. In this time he wrote the famous 'Drapier's Letters' and 'Gulliver's Travels.' He married Hester Johnson (Stella), and buried Esther Vanhomrigh (Vanessa), who had followed him to Ireland from London, where she had contracted a violent passion for him. In 1726 and 1727 Swift was in England, which he quitted for the last time on hearing of his wife's illness. Stella died in January 1728, and Swift not until 1745, having passed the last five of the seventy-eight years of his life with an impaired intellect and keepers to watch him.

You know, of course, that Swift has had many biographers; his life has been told by the kindest and most good-natured of men, Scott, who admires but can't bring himself to love him; and by stout old Johnson, who, forced to admit him into the company of poets, receives the famous Irishman, and takes off his hat to him with a bow of surly recognition, scans him from head to foot, and passes over to the other side of the street. Doctor Wilde of Dublin, who has written a most interesting volume on the closing years of Swift's life, calls Johnson 'the most malignant of his biographers': it is not easy for an English critic to please Irishmen — perhaps to try and please them. And yet Johnson truly admires Swift: Johnson does not quarrel with Swift's change of politics, or doubt his sincerity of religion: about the famous Stella and Vanessa controversy the Doctor does not bear very hardly on Swift. But he could not give the Dean that honest hand of his; the stout old man puts it into his breast, and moves off from him.

Would we have liked to live with him? That is a question which, in dealing with these people's works, and thinking of their lives and peculiarities, every reader of biographies must put to himself. Would you have liked to be a friend of the great Dean? I should like to have been

Shakespeare's shoeblack — just to have lived in his house, just to have worshipped him — to have run on his errands, and seen that sweet serene face. I should like, as a young man, to have lived on Fielding's staircase in the Temple, and after helping him up to bed perhaps, and opening his door with his latch-key, to have shaken hands with him in the morning, and heard him talk and crack jokes over his breakfast and his mug of small beer. Who would not give something to pass a night at the club with Johnson, and Goldsmith, and James Boswell, Esquire, of Auchinleck? The charm of Addison's companionship and conversation has passed to us by fond tradition — but Swift? If you had been his inferior in parts (and that, with a great respect for all persons present, I fear is only very likely), his equal in mere social station, he would have bullied, scorned, and insulted you; if, undeterred by his great reputation, you had met him like a man, he would have quailed before you, and not had the pluck to reply, and gone home, and years after written a foul epigram about you — watched for you in a sewer, and come out to assail you with a coward's blow and a dirty bludgeon. If you had been a lord with a blue riband, who flattered his vanity, or could help his ambition, he would have been the most delightful company in the world. He would have been so manly, so sarcastic, so bright, odd, and original, that you might think he had no object in view but the indulgence of his humour, and that he was the most reckless simple creature in the world. How he would have torn your enemies to pieces for you! and made fun of the Opposition! His servility was so boisterous that it looked like independence; he would have done your errands, but with the air of patronising you; and after fighting your battles, masked, in the street or the press, would have kept on his hat before your wife and daughters in the drawing-room, content to take that sort of pay for his tremendous services as a bravo.

*'Thus at the bar, the booby Bettesworth,
Though half-a-crown o'er pays his sweat's worth
Who knows in law nor text nor margent,
Calls Singleton his brother serjeant!'*

He says as much himself in one of his letters to Bolingbroke: — 'All my endeavours to distinguish myself were only for want of a great title and fortune, that I might be used like a lord by those who have an opinion of my parts; whether right or wrong is no great matter. And so the reputation of wit and great learning does the office of a blue riband or a coach and six.'

Could there be a greater candour? It is an outlaw, who says, 'These are my brains; with these I'll win titles and compete with fortune. These are my bullets; these I'll turn into gold'; and he hears the sound of coaches and six, takes the road like Macheath, and makes society stand and deliver. They are all on their knees before him. Down go my Lord

Bishop's apron, and his Grace's blue riband, and my Lady's brocade petticoat in the mud. He eases the one of a living, the other of a patent place, the third of a little snug post about the Court, and gives them over to followers of his own. The great prize has not come yet. The coach with the mitre and crozier in it, which he intends to have for *his* share, has been delayed on the way from Saint James's; and he waits and waits until nightfall, when his runners come and tell him that the coach has taken a different road, and escaped him. So he fires his pistols into the air with a curse, and rides away into his own country.

Swift's seems to me to be as good a name to point a moral or adorn a tale of ambition as any hero's that ever lived and failed. But we must remember that the morality was lax — that other gentlemen besides himself took the road in his day — that public society was in a strange disordered condition, and the State was ravaged by other condottieri. The Boyne was being fought and won, and lost — the bells rung in William's victory, in the very same tone with which they would have pealed for James's. Men were loose upon politics, and had to shift for themselves. They, as well as old beliefs and institutions, had lost their moorings and gone adrift in the storm. As in the South Sea Bubble, almost everybody gambled; as in the Railway mania — not many centuries ago — almost every one took his unlucky share: a man of that time, of the vast talents and ambition of Swift, could scarce do otherwise than grasp at his prize, and make his spring at his opportunity. His bitterness, his scorn, his rage, his subsequent misanthropy are ascribed by some panegyrists to a deliberate conviction of mankind's unworthiness, and a desire to amend them by castigation. His youth was bitter, as that of a great genius bound down by ignoble ties, and powerless in a mean dependence; his age was bitter, like that of a great genius, that had fought the battle and nearly won it, and lost it, and thought of it afterwards, writhing in a lonely exile. A man may attribute to the gods, if he likes, what is caused by his own fury, or disappointment, or self-will. What public man — what statesman projecting a *coup* — what king determined on an invasion of his neighbour — what satirist meditating an onslaught on society or an individual, can't give a pretext for his move? There was a French General the other day who proposed to march into this country and put it to sack and pillage, in revenge for humanity outraged by our conduct at Copenhagen: there is always some excuse for men of the aggressive turn. They are of their nature warlike, predatory, eager for fight, plunder, dominion.

As fierce a beak and talon as ever struck — as strong a wing as ever beat, belonged to Swift. I am glad, for one, that fate wrested the prey out of his claws, and cut his wings and chained him. One can gaze, and not without awe and pity, at the lonely eagle chained behind the bars.

That Swift was born at No. 7 Hoey's Court, Dublin, on the 30th November, 1667, is a certain fact, of which nobody will deny the sister

island the honour and glory; but, it seems to me, he was no more an Irishman than a man born of English parents at Calcutta is a Hindoo. Goldsmith was an Irishman, and always an Irishman: Steele was an Irishman, and always an Irishman: Swift's heart was English and in England, his habits English, his logic eminently English; his statement is elaborately simple; he shuns tropes and metaphors, and uses his ideas and words with a wise thrift and economy, as he used his money: with which he could be generous and splendid upon great occasions, but which he husbanded when there was no need to spend it. He never indulges in needless extravagance of rhetoric, lavish epithets, profuse imagery. He lays his opinion before you with a grave simplicity and a perfect neatness. Dreading ridicule too, as a man of his humour — above all, an Englishman of his humour — certainly would, he is afraid to use the poetical power which he really possessed; one often fancies in reading him that he dares not be eloquent when he might; that he does not speak above his voice, as it were, and the tone of society.

His initiation into politics, his knowledge of business, his knowledge of polite life, his acquaintance with literature even, which he could not have pursued very sedulously during that reckless career at Dublin, Swift got under the roof to Sir William Temple. He was fond of telling in after life what quantities of books he devoured there, and how King William taught him to cut asparagus in the Dutch fashion. It was at Shene and at Moor Park, with a salary of twenty pounds and a dinner at the upper servants' table, that this great and lonely Swift passed a ten years' apprenticeship — wore a cassock that was only not a livery — bent down a knee as proud as Lucifer's to supplicate my Lady's good graces, or run on his honour's errands. It was here, as he was writing at Temple's table, or following his patron's walk, that he saw and heard the men who had governed the great world — measured himself with them, looking up from his silent corner, gauged their brains, weighed their wits, turned them, and tried them, and marked them. Ah! what platitudes he must have heard! what feeble jokes! what pompous common-places! what small men they must have seemed under those enormous periwigs, to the swarthy, uncouth, silent Irish secretary. I wonder whether it ever struck Temple, that that Irishman was his master? I suppose that dismal conviction did not present itself under the ambrosial wig, or Temple could never have lived with Swift. Swift sickened, rebelled, left the service — ate humble pie and came back again; and so for ten years went on, gathering learning, swallowing scorn, and submitting with a stealthy rage to his fortune.

Temple's style is the perfection of practised and easy good breeding. If he does not penetrate very deeply into a subject, he professes a very gentlemanly acquaintance with it; if he makes rather a parade of Latin, it was the custom of his day, as it was the custom for a gentleman to envelop his head in a periwig and his hands in lace ruffles. If he wears

buckles and square-toed shoes, he steps in them with a consummate grace, and you never hear their creak, or find them treading upon any lady's train or any rival's heels in the Court crowd. When that grows too hot or too agitated for him, he politely leaves it. He retires to his retreat of Shene or Moor Park; and lets the King's party and the Prince of Orange's party battle it out among themselves. He reveres the Sovereign (and no man perhaps ever testified to his loyalty by so elegant a bow); he admires the Prince of Orange; but there is one person whose ease and comfort he loves more than all the princes in Christendom, and that valuable member of society is himself, Gulielmus Temple, Baronettus. One sees him in his retreat: between his study-chair and his tulip-beds, clipping his apricots and pruning his essays, — the statesman, the ambassador no more; but the philosopher, the Epicurean, the fine gentleman and courtier at St. James's as at Shene; where, in place of kings and fair ladies, he pays his court to the Ciceronian majesty; or walks a minuet with the Epic Muse; or dallies by the south wall with the ruddy nymph of gardens.

Temple seems to have received and exacted a prodigious deal of veneration from his household, and to have been coaxed, and warmed, and cuddled by the people around about him, as delicately as any of the plants which he loved. When he fell ill in 1693, the household was aghast at his indisposition; mild Dorothea his wife, the best companion of the best of men —

*'Mild Dorothea, peaceful, wise and great,
Trembling beheld the doubtful hand of fate.'*

As for Dorinda, his sister, —

*'Those who would grief describe, might come and trace
Its watery footsteps in Dorinda's face.
To see her weep, joy every face forsook,
And grief flung sables on each menial look.
The humble tribe mourned for the quickening soul,
That furnished spirit and motion through the whole.'*

Isn't that line in which grief is described as putting the menials into a mourning livery, a fine image? One of the menials wrote it, who did not like that Temple livery nor those twenty-pound wages. Cannot one fancy the uncouth young servitor, with downcast eyes, books and papers in hand, following at his honour's heels in the garden walk; or taking his honour's orders as he stands by the great chair, where Sir William has the gout, and his feet all blistered with moxa? When Sir William has the gout or scolds it must be hard work at the second table; the Irish secretary owned as much afterwards; and when he came to dinner, how he must have lashed and growled and torn the household with his gibes and scorn! What would the steward say about the pride of them Irish schollards —

and this one had got no great credit even at his Irish college, if the truth were known — and what a contempt his Excellency's own gentleman must have had for Parson Teague from Dublin! (The valets and chaplains were always at war. It is hard to say which Swift thought the more contemptible.) And what must have been the sadness, the sadness and terror, of the house-keeper's little daughter with the curling black ringlets and the sweet smiling face, when the secretary who teaches her to read and write, and whom she loves and reverences above all things — above mother, above mild Dorothea, above that tremendous Sir William in his square toes and periwig, — when *Mr. Swift* comes down from his master with rage in his heart, and has not a kind word even for little Hester Johnson?

Perhaps, for the Irish secretary, his Excellency's condescension was even more cruel than his frowns. Sir William *would* perpetually quote Latin and the ancient classics *à propos* of his gardens and his Dutch statues, and *plates-bandes*, and talk about Epicurus and Diogenes Lærtius, Julius Cæsar, Semiramis, and the gardens of the Hesperides, Mæcenas, Strabo describing Jericho, and the Assyrian kings. *A propos* of beans, he would mention Pythagoras's precept to abstain from beans, and that this precept probably meant that wise men should abstain from public affairs. *He* is a placid Epicurean; *he* is a Pythagorean philosopher; *he* is a wise man — that is the deduction. Does not Swift think so? One can imagine the downcast eyes lifted up for a moment, and the flash of scorn which they emit. Swift's eyes were as azure as the heavens; Pope says nobly (as everything Pope said and thought of his friend was good and noble), 'His eyes are as azure as the heavens, and have a charming archness in them.' And one person in that household, that pompous, stately, kindly Moor Park, saw heaven nowhere else.

But the Temple amenities and solemnities did not agree with Swift. He was half-killed with a surfeit of Shene pippins; and in a garden-seat which he devised for himself at Moor Park, and where he devoured greedily the stock of books within his reach, he caught a vertigo and deafness which punished and tormented him through life. He could not bear the place or the servitude. Even in that poem of courtly condolence, from which we have quoted a few lines of mock melancholy, he breaks out of the funereal procession with a mad shriek, as it were, and rushes away crying his own grief, cursing his own fate, foreboding madness, and forsaken by fortune, and even hope.

I don't know anything more melancholy than the letter to Temple, in which, after having broke from his bondage, the poor wretch crouches piteously towards his cage again, and deprecates his master's anger. He asks for testimonials for orders.

'The particulars required of me are what relate to morals and learning; and the reasons of quitting your honour's family — that is, whether the

last was occasioned by any ill action. They are left entirely to your honour's mercy, though in the first I think I cannot reproach myself for anything further than for *infirmities*. This is all I dare at present beg from your honour, under circumstances of life not worth your regard: what is left me to wish (next to the health and prosperity of your honour and family) is that Heaven would one day allow me the opportunity of leaving my acknowledgements at your feet. I beg my most humble duty and service be presented to my ladies, your honour's lady and sister.'

Can prostration fall deeper? could a slave bow lower?

Twenty years afterwards Bishop Kennet, describing the same man says:—

'Dr. Swift came into the coffee-house and had a bow from everybody but me. When I came to the antechamber [at Court] to wait before prayers, Dr. Swift was the principal man of talk and business. He was soliciting the Earl of Arran to speak to his brother, the Duke of Ormond, to get a place for a clergyman. He was promising Mr. Thorold to undertake, with my Lord Treasurer, that he should obtain a salary of £200 per annum as member of the English Church at Rotterdam. He stopped F. Gwynne, Esquire, going into the Queen with the red bag, and told him aloud, he had something to say to him from my Lord Treasurer. He took out his gold watch, and telling the time of day, complained that it was very late. A gentleman said he was too fast. "How can I help it," says the Doctor, "if the courtiers give me a watch that won't go right?" Then he instructed a young nobleman, that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope (a papist), who had begun a translation of Homer into English, for which he would have them all subscribe: "For," says he, "he shall not begin to print till I have a thousand guineas for him." Lord Treasurer, after leaving the Queen, came through the room, beckoning Doctor Swift to follow him — both went off just before prayers.'

There's a little malice in the Bishop's 'just before prayers.'

This picture of the great Dean seems a true one, and is harsh, though not altogether unpleasant. He was doing good, and to deserving men, too, in the midst of these intrigues and triumphs. His journals and a thousand anecdotes of him relate his kind acts and rough manners. His hand was constantly stretched out to relieve an honest man — he was cautious about his money, but ready. If you were in a strait, would you like such a benefactor? I think I would rather have had a potato and a friendly word from Goldsmith than have been beholden to the Dean for a guinea and a dinner. He insulted a man as he served him, made women cry, guests look foolish, bullied unlucky friends, and flung his benefactions into poor men's faces. No; the Dean was no Irishman — no Irishman ever gave but with a kind word and a kind heart.

It is told, as if it were to Swift's credit, that the Dean of Saint Patrick's performed his family devotions every morning regularly, but with such secrecy that the guests in his house were never in the least aware of the ceremony. There was no need surely why a Church dignitary should assemble his family privily in a crypt and as if he was afraid of heathen persecution. But I think the world was right, and the bishops who advised Queen Anne when they counselled her not to appoint the author of the 'Tale of a Tub' to a bishopric, gave perfectly good advice. The man who wrote the arguments and illustrations in that wild book, could not but be aware what must be the sequel of the propositions which he laid down. The boon companion of Pope and Bolingbroke, who chose these as the friends of his life, and the recipients of his confidence and affection, must have heard many an argument, and joined in many a conversation over Pope's port, or St. John's burgundy, which would not bear to be repeated at other men's boards.

I know of few things more conclusive as to the sincerity of Swift's religion than his advice to poor John Gay to turn clergyman, and look out for a seat on the Bench. Gay, the author of the 'Beggar's Opera' — Gay the wildest of the wits about town — it was this man that Jonathan Swift advised to take orders — to invest in a cassock and bands — just as he advised him to husband his shillings and put his thousand pounds out at interest. The Queen, and the bishops, and the world, were right in mistrusting the religion of that man.

I am not here, of course, to speak of any man's religious views, except in so far as they influence his literary character, his life, his humour. The most notorious sinners of all those fellow-mortals whom it is our business to discuss — Harry Fielding and Dick Steele — were especially loud, and I believe really fervent, in their expressions of belief; they belaboured freethinkers, and stoned imaginary atheists on all sorts of occasions, going out of their way to bawl their own creed, and persecute their neighbour's, and if they sinned and stumbled, as they constantly did with debt, with drink, with all sorts of bad behaviour, they got upon their knees and cried 'Peccavi' with a most sonorous orthodoxy. Yes; poor Harry Fielding and poor Dick Steele were trusty and undoubting Church of England men; they abhorred Popery, Atheism, and wooden shoes and idolatries in general; and hiccupped Church and State with fervour.

But Swift? *His* mind had had a different schooling, and possessed a very different logical power. *He* was not bred up in a tipsy guardroom, and did not learn to reason in a Covent Garden tavern. He could conduct an argument from beginning to end. He could see forward with a fatal clearness. In his old age, looking at the 'Tale of a Tub,' when he said, 'Good God, what a genius I had when I wrote that book!' I think he was admiring, not the genius, but the consequences to which the genius had brought him — a vast genius, a magnificent genius, a genius wonderfully bright,

and dazzling, and strong, — to seize, to know, to see, to flash upon falsehood and scorch it into perdition, to penetrate into the hidden motives, and expose the black thoughts of men, — an awful, an evil spirit.

Ah, man! you, educated in Epicurean Temple's library, you whose friends were Pope and St. John — what made you to swear to fatal vows, and bind yourself to a life-long hypocrisy before the Heaven which you adored with such real wonder, humility, and reverence? For Swift's was a reverent, was a pious spirit — for Swift could love and could fray. Through the storms and tempests of his furious mind, the stars of religion and love break out in the blue, shining serenely, though hidden by the driving clouds and the maddened hurricane of his life.

It is my belief that he suffered frightfully from the consciousness of his own scepticism, and that he had bent his pride so far down as to put his apostasy out to hire. The paper left behind him, called 'Thoughts on Religion,' is merely a set of excuses for not professing disbelief. He says of his sermons that he preached pamphlets: they have scarce a Christian characteristic; they might be preached from the steps of a synagogue, or the floor of a mosque, or the box of a coffee-house almost. There is little or no cant — he is too great and too proud for that; and, in so far as the badness of his sermons goes, he is honest. But having put that cassock on, it poisoned him; he was strangled in his bands. He goes through life, tearing, like a man possessed with a devil. Like Abudah in the Arabian story, he is always looking out for the Fury, and knows that the night will come and the inevitable hag with it. What a night, my God, it was! what a lonely rage and long agony — what a vulture that tore the heart of that giant! It is awful to think of the great sufferings of this great man. Through life he always seems alone, somehow. Goethe was so. I can't fancy Shakespeare otherwise. The giants must live apart. The kings can have no company. But this man suffered so; and deserved so to suffer. One hardly reads anywhere of such a pain.

The 'sæva indignatio' of which he spoke as lacerating his heart, and which he dares to inscribe on his tombstone — as if the wretch who lay under that stone waiting God's judgment had a right to be angry — breaks out from him in a thousand pages of his writing, and tears and rends him. Against men in office, he having been overthrown; against men in England, he having lost his chance of preferment there, the furious exile never fails to rage and curse. Is it fair to call the famous 'Drapier's Letters' patriotism? They are masterpieces of dreadful humour and invective: they are reasoned logically enough too, but the proposition is as monstrous and fabulous as the Lilliputian island. It is not that the grievance is so great, but there is his enemy — the assault is wonderful for its activity and terrible rage. It is Samson with a bone in his hand, rushing on his enemies and felling them: one admires not the cause so much as the strength, the anger, the fury of the champion. As is the case

with madmen, certain subjects provoke him, and awaken his fits of wrath. Marriage is one of these; in a hundred passages in his writings he rages against it; rages against children; an object of constant satire, even more contemptible in his eyes than a lord's chaplain, is a poor curate with a large family. The idea of this luckless paternity never fails to bring down from him gibes and foul language. Could Dick Steele, or Goldsmith, or Fielding, in his most reckless moment of satire, have written anything like the Dean's famous 'Modest Proposal' for eating children? Not one of these but melts at the thoughts of childhood, fondles and caresses it. Mr. Dean has no such softness, and enters the nursery with the tread and gaiety of an ogre. 'I have been assured,' says he in the 'Modest Proposal' 'by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child, well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt it will equally serve in a *ragoût*.' And taking up this pretty joke, as his way is, he argues it with perfect gravity and logic. He turns and twists this subject in a score of different ways; he hashes it; and he serves it up cold; and he garnishes it; and relishes it always. He describes the little animal as 'dropped from its dam,' advising that the mother should let it suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render it plump and fat for a good table! 'A child,' says his Reverence, 'will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish,' and so on; and the subject being so delightful that he can't leave it, he proceeds to recommend, in place of venison for squires' tables, 'the bodies of young lads and maidens not exceeding fourteen or under twelve.' Amiable humourist! laughing castigator of morals! There was a process well known and practised in the Dean's gay days; when a lout entered the coffee-house, the wags proceeded to what they called 'roasting' him. This is roasting a subject with a vengeance. The Dean had a native genius for it. As the 'Almanach des Gourmands' says, 'On naît rôtisseur.'

And it was not merely by the sarcastic method that Swift exposed the unreasonableness of loving and having children. In 'Gulliver,' the folly of love and marriage is urged by graver arguments and advice. In the famous Lilliputian kingdom, Swift speaks with approval of the practice of instantly removing children from their parents and educating them by the State; and amongst his favourite horses, a pair of foals are stated to be the very utmost a well-regulated equine couple would permit themselves. In fact, our great satirist was of opinion that conjugal love was unadvisable, and illustrated the theory by his own practice and example — God help him! — which made him about the most wretched being in God's world.

The grave and logical conduct of an absurd proposition, as exemplified in the cannibal proposal just mentioned, is our author's constant method

through all his works of humour. Given a country of people six inches or sixty feet high, and by the mere process of the logic, a thousand wonderful absurdities are evolved, at so many stages of the calculation. Turning to the First Minister who waited behind him with a white staff near as tall as the mainmast of the 'Royal Sovereign,' the King of Brobdingnag observes how contemptible a thing human grandeur is, as represented by such a contemptible little creature as Gulliver. 'The Emperor of Lilliput's features are strong and masculine' (what a surprising humour there is in this description!) — 'The Emperor's features,' Gulliver says, 'are strong and masculine, with an Austrian lip, an arched nose, his complexion olive, his countenance erect, his body and limbs well proportioned, and his deportment majestic. He is taller *by the breadth of my nail* than any of his Court, which alone is enough to strike an awe into beholders.'

What a surprising humour there is in these descriptions! How noble the satire is here! how just and honest! How perfect the image! Mr. Macaulay has quoted the charming lines of the poet where the king of the pigmies is measured by the same standard. We have all read in Milton of the spear that was like 'the mast of some great ammiral;' but these images are surely likely to come to the comic poet originally. The subject is before him. He is turning it in a thousand ways. He is full of it. The figure suggests itself naturally to him, and comes out of his subject, as in that wonderful passage, when Gulliver's box having been dropped by the eagle into the sea, and Gulliver having been received into the ship's cabin, he calls upon the crew to bring the box into the cabin, and put it on the table, the cabin being only a quarter the size of the box. It is the *veracity* of the blunder which is so admirable. Had a man come from such a country as Brobdingnag, he would have blundered so.

But the best stroke of humour, if there be a best in that abounding book, is that where Gulliver, in the unpronounceable country, describes his parting from his master the horse.

'I took,' he says, 'a second leave of my master, but as I was going to prostrate myself to kiss his hoof, he did me the honour to raise it gently to my mouth. I am not ignorant how much I have been censured for mentioning this last particular. Detractors are pleased to think it improbable that so illustrious a person should descend to give so great a mark of distinction to a creature so inferior as I. Neither have I forgotten how apt some travellers are to boast of extraordinary favours they have received. But if these censurers were better acquainted with the noble and courteous disposition of the Houyhnhnms they would soon change their opinion.'

The surprise here, the audacity of circumstantial evidence, the astounding gravity of the speaker, who is not ignorant how much he has been

censured, the nature of the favour conferred, and the respectful exultation at the receipt of it, are surely complete; it is truth topsy-turvy, entirely logical and absurd.

As for the humour and conduct of this famous fable, I suppose there is no person who reads but must admire; as for the moral, I think it horrible, shameful, unmanly, blasphemous; and giant and great as this Dean is, I say we should hoot him. Some of this audience mayn't have read the last part of Gulliver, and to such I would recall the advice of the venerable *Mr. Punch* to persons about to marry, and say 'Don't.' When Gulliver first lands among the Yahoos, the naked howling wretches clamber up trees and assault him, and he describes himself as 'almost stifled with the filth which fell about him.' The reader of the fourth part of 'Gulliver's Travels' is like the hero himself in this instance. It is Yahoo language: a monster gibbering shrieks, and gnashing imprecations against mankind — tearing down all shreds of modesty, past all sense of manliness and shame; filthy in word, filthy in thought, furious, raging, obscene.

And dreadful it is to think that Swift knew the tendency of his creed — the fatal rocks towards which his logic desperately drifted. That last part of 'Gulliver' is only a consequence of what has gone before; and the worthlessness of all mankind, the pettiness, cruelty, pride, imbecility, the general vanity, the foolish pretension, the mock greatness, the pompous dulness, the mean aims, the base successes — all these were present to him; it was with the din of these curses of the world, blasphemies against Heaven, shrieking in his ears, that he began to write his dreadful allegory — of which the meaning is that man is utterly wicked, desperate, and imbecile, and his passions are so monstrous, and his boasted powers so mean, that he is and deserves to be the slave of brutes, and ignorance is better than his vaunted reason. What had this man done? what secret remorse was rankling at his heart? what fever was boiling in him, that he should see all the world bloodshot? We view the world with our own eyes, each of us; and we make from within us the world we see. A weary heart gets no gladness out of sunshine; a selfish man is sceptical about friendship, as a man with no ear doesn't care for music. A frightful self-consciousness it must have been, which looked on mankind so darkly through those keen eyes of Swift.

A remarkable story is told by Scott, of Delany, who interrupted Archbishop King and Swift in a conversation which left the prelate in tears, and from which Swift rushed away with marks of strong terror and agitation in his countenance, upon which the Archbishop said to Delany, 'You have just met the most unhappy man on earth; but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question.'

The most unhappy man on earth; — *Miserrimus* — what a character of him! And at this time all the great wits of England had been at his feet. All Ireland had shouted after him, and worshipped him as a liberator, a

saviour, the greatest Irish patriot and citizen. Dean Drapier Bickerstaff Gulliver — the most famous statesmen and the greatest poets of his day had applauded him and done him homage; and at this time, writing over to Bolingbroke from Ireland, he says, 'It is time for me to have done with the world, and so I would if I could get into a better before I was called into the best, *and not die here in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole.*'

We have spoken about the men, and Swift's behaviour to them; and now it behoves us not to forget that there are certain other persons in the creation who had rather intimate relations with the great Dean. Two women whom he loved and injured are known by every reader of books so familiarly that if we had seen them, or if they had been relatives of our own, we scarcely could have known them better. Who hasn't in his mind an image of Stella? Who does not love her? Fair and tender creature: pure and affectionate heart! Boots it to you, now that you have been at rest for a hundred and twenty years, not divided in death from the cold heart which caused yours, whilst it beat, such faithful pangs of love and grief — boots it to you now, that the whole world loves and deploras you? Scarce any man, I believe, ever thought of that grave, that did not cast a flower of pity on it, and write over it a sweet epitaph. Gentle lady, so lovely, so loving, so unhappy! you have had countless champions; millions of manly hearts mourning for you. From generation to generation we take up the fond tradition of your beauty, we watch and follow your tragedy, your bright morning love and purity, your constancy, your grief, your sweet martyrdom. We know your legend by heart. You are one of the saints of English story.

And if Stella's love and innocence are charming to contemplate, I will say that, in spite of ill-usage, in spite of drawbacks, in spite of mysterious separation and union, of hope delayed and sickened heart — in the teeth of Vanessa, and that little episodic aberration which plunged Swift into such woeful pitfalls and quagmires of amorous perplexity — in spite of the verdicts of most women, I believe, who, as far as my experience and conversation go, generally take Vanessa's part in the controversy, — in spite of the tears which Swift caused Stella to shed, and the rocks and barriers which fate and temper interposed, and which prevented the pure course of that true love from running smoothly — the brightest part of Swift's story, the pure star in that dark and tempestuous life of Swift's, is his love for Hester Johnson. It has been my business, professionally of course, to go through a deal of sentimental reading in my time, and to acquaint myself with love-making, as it has been described in various languages, and at various ages of the world; and I know of nothing more manly, more tender, more exquisitely touching, than some of these brief notes, written in what Swift calls 'his little language' in his journal to Stella. He writes to her night and morning often. He never sends away a

letter to her but he begins a new one on the same day. He can't bear to let go her kind little hand, as it were. He knows that she is thinking of him, and longing for him far away in Dublin yonder. He takes her letters from under his pillow and talks to them, familiarly, paternally, with fond epithets and pretty caresses — as he would to the sweet and artless creature who loved him. 'Stay,' he writes one morning — it is the 14th of December, 1710 — 'Stay, I will answer some of your letters this morning in bed. Let me see. Come and appear, little letter! Here I am, says he, and what say you to Stella this morning fresh and fasting? And can Stella read this writing without hurting her dear eyes?' he goes on, after more kind prattle and fond whispering. The dear eyes shine clearly upon him then — the good angel of his life is with him and blessing him. Ah, it was a hard fate that wrung from them so many tears, and stabbed pitilessly that pure and tender bosom. A hard fate: but would she have changed it? I have heard a woman say that she would have taken Swift's cruelty to have had his tenderness. He had a sort of worship for her whilst he wounded her. He speaks of her after she is gone; of her wit, of her kindness, of her grace, of her beauty, with a simple love and reverence that are indescribably touching; in contemplation of her goodness his hard heart melts into pathos; his cold rhyme kindles and glows into poetry, and he falls down on his knees, so to speak, before the angel whose life he had embittered, confesses his own wretchedness and unworthiness, and adores her with cries of remorse and love: —

*'When on my sickly couch I lay,
 Impatient both of night and day,
 And groaning in unmanly strains,
 Called every power to ease my pains,
 Then Stella ran to my relief,
 With cheerful face and inward grief,
 And though by Heaven's severe decree
 She suffers hourly more than me,
 No cruel master could require
 From slaves employed for daily hire,
 What Stella, by her friendship warmed,
 With vigour and delight performed.
 Now, with a soft and silent tread,
 Unheard she moves about my bed:
 My sinking spirits now supplies
 With cordials in her hands and eyes.
 Best pattern of true friends! beware
 You pay too dearly for your care
 If, while your tenderness secures
 My life, it must endanger yours:*

*For such a fool was never found
Who pulled a palace to the ground,
Only to have the ruins made
Materials for a house decayed.'*

One little triumph Stella had in her life — one dear little piece of injustice was performed in her favour, for which I confess, for my part, I can't help thanking fate and the Dean. *That other person* was sacrificed to her — that — that young woman, who lived five doors from Doctor Swift's lodgings in Bury Street, and who flattered him, and made love to him in such an outrageous manner — Vanessa was thrown over.

Swift did not keep Stella's letters to him in reply to those he wrote to her. He kept Bolingbroke's, and Pope's, and Harley's, and Peterborough's: but Stella 'very carefully,' the Lives say, kept Swift's. Of course: that is the way of the world: and so we cannot tell what her style was, or of what sort were the little letters which the Doctor placed there at night, and bade to appear from under his pillow of a morning. But in Letter IV of that famous collection he describes his lodging in Bury Street, where he has the first floor, a dining-room and bed-chamber, at eight shillings a week; and in Letter VI he says 'he has visited a lady just come to town,' whose name somehow is not mentioned; and in Letter VIII he enters a query of Stella's — 'What do you mean "that boards near me, that I dine with now and then"?' What the deuce! You know whom I have dined with every day since I left you, better than I do.' Of course she does. Of course Swift has not the slightest idea of what she means. But in a few letters more it turns out that the Doctor has been to dine 'gravely' with a Mrs. Vanhomrigh: then that he has been to 'his neighbour:' then that he has been unwell, and means to dine for the whole week with his neighbour! Stella was quite right in her previsions. She saw from the very first hint what was going to happen; and scented Vanessa in the air. The rival is at the Dean's feet. The pupil and teacher are reading together, and drinking tea together, and going to prayers together, and learning Latin together, and conjugating *amo*, *amas*, *amavi* together. The 'little language' is over for poor Stella. By the rule of grammar and the course of conjugation, doesn't *amavi* come after *amo* and *amas*?

The loves of Cadenus and Vanessa you may peruse in Cadenus's own poem on the subject, and in poor Vanessa's vehement expostulatory verses and letters to him; she adores him, implores him, admires him, thinks him something godlike, and only prays to be admitted to lie at his feet. As they are bringing him home from church, those divine feet of Doctor Swift's are found pretty often in Vanessa's parlour. He likes to be admired and adored. He finds Miss Vanhomrigh to be a woman of great taste and spirit, and beauty and wit, and a fortune too. He sees her every day; he does not tell Stella about the business; until the impetuous Vanessa be-


comes too fond of him, until the Doctor is quite frightened by the young woman's ardour, and confounded by her warmth. He wanted to marry neither of them — that I believe was the truth; but if he had not married Stella, Vanessa would have had him in spite of himself. When he went back to Ireland, his Ariadne, not content to remain in her isle, pursued the fugitive Dean. In vain he protested, he vowed, he soothed, and bullied; the news of the Dean's marriage with Stella at last came to her, and it killed her — she died of that passion.

And when she died, and Stella heard that Swift had written beautifully regarding her, 'That doesn't surprise me,' said Mrs. Stella, 'for we all know the Dean could write beautifully about a broomstick.' A woman — a true woman! Would you have had one of them forgive the other?

In a note in his biography, Scott says that his friend Doctor Tuke, of Dublin, has a lock of Stella's hair, enclosed in a paper by Swift, on which are written, in the Dean's hand, the words: '*Only a woman's hair.*' An instance, says Scott, of the Dean's desire to veil his feelings under the mask of cynical indifference.

See the various notions of critics! Do those words indicate indifference or an attempt to hide feeling? Did you ever hear or read four words more pathetic? Only a woman's hair; only love, only fidelity, only purity, innocence, beauty; only the tenderest heart in the world stricken and wounded, and passed away now out of reach of pangs of hope deferred, love insulted, and pitiless desertion: — only that lock of hair left; and memory and remorse, for the guilty lonely wretch, shuddering over the grave of his victim.

And yet to have had so much love, he must have given some. Treasures of wit and wisdom, and tenderness, too, must that man have had locked up in the caverns of his gloomy heart, and shown fitfully to one or two whom he took in there. But it was not good to visit that place. People did not remain there long, and suffered for having been there. He shrank away from all affections sooner or later. Stella and Vanessa both died near him, and away from him. He had not heart enough to see them die. He broke from his fastest friend, Sheridan; he slunk away from his fondest admirer, Pope. His laugh jars on one's ear after seven score years. He was always alone — alone and gnashing in the darkness, except when Stella's sweet smile came and shone upon him. When that went, silence and utter night closed over him. An immense genius: an awful downfall and ruin. So great a man he seems to me, that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling. We have other great names to mention — none, I think, however, so great or so gloomy.



HENRY ST. JOHN, LORD BOLINGBROKE

1672-1751

By OLIVER GOLDSMITH ¹ (1728-1774)



THERE are some characters that seem formed by nature to take delight in struggling with opposition, and whose most agreeable hours are passed in storms of their own creating. The subject of the present sketch was perhaps, of all others, the most indefatigable in raising himself enemies, to show his power in subduing them; and was not less employed in improving his superior talents, than on finding objects on which to exercise their activity. His life was spent in a continual conflict of politics; and, as if that was too short for the combat, he has left his memory as a subject of lasting contention.

It is, indeed, no easy matter to preserve an acknowledged impartiality in talking of a man so differently regarded on account of his political, as well as his religious principles. Those whom his politics may please, will be sure to condemn him for his religion; and on the contrary, those most strongly attached to his theological opinions, are the most likely to decry his politics. On whatever side he is regarded, he is sure to have opposers; and this was perhaps what he most desired, having, from nature, a mind better pleased with the struggle than the victory.

Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, was born in the year 1672, at Battersea, in Surrey, at a seat that had been in the possession of his ancestors for ages before. His family was of the first rank, equally conspicuous for its antiquity, dignity, and large possessions. It is found to trace its original as high as Adam de Port, Baron of Basing, in Hampshire, before the conquest; and in a succession of ages, to have produced warriors patriots, and statesmen, some of whom were conspicuous for their loyalty, and others for their defending the rights of the people. His grandfather, Sir Walter St. John, of Battersea, marrying one of the daughters of Lord Chief Justice St. John, who, as all know, was strongly attached to the republican party, Henry, the subject of the present memoir, was brought up in his family, and consequently, imbibed the first principles of his education among the dissenters. At that time, Daniel Burgess, a fanatic of a very peculiar kind, being at once possessed of zeal and humour, and as

¹ Reprinted from *The Life of Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke*, London, 1770. Originally appeared as a preface to Bolingbroke's *Dissertation on Parties*.

The spelling and punctuation have been modernised.

well known for the archness of his conceits, as the furious obstinacy of his principles, was confessor in the presbyterian way to his grandmother, and was appointed to direct our author's first studies. Nothing is so apt to disgust a feeling mind as mistaken zeal; and, perhaps, the absurdity of the first lectures he received, might have given him that contempt for all religions, which he might have justly conceived against one. Indeed no task can be more mortifying than what he was condemned to undergo: "I was obliged," says he, in one place, "while yet a boy, to read over the commentaries of Dr. Manton, whose pride it was to have made a hundred and nineteen sermons on the hundred and nineteenth psalm." Dr. Manton and his sermons were not likely to prevail much on one who was, perhaps, the most sharp-sighted in the world at discovering the absurdities of others, however he might have been guilty of establishing many of his own.

But these dreary institutions were of no very long continuance; as soon as it was fit to take him out of the hands of the women, he was sent to Eton school, and removed thence to Christ-church College, in Oxford. His genius and understanding were seen and admired in both these seminaries, but his love of pleasure had so much the ascendancy, that he seemed contented rather with the consciousness of his own great powers, than their exertion. However, his friends, and those who knew him most intimately, were thoroughly sensible of the extent of his mind; and, when he left the university, he was considered as one who had the fairest opportunity of making a shining figure in active life.

‡ Nature seemed not less kind to him in her external embellishments than in adorning his mind. With the graces of a handsome person, and a face in which dignity was happily blended with sweetness, he had a manner of address that was very engaging. His vivacity was always awake, his apprehension was quick, his wit refined, and his memory amazing: his subtlety in thinking and reasoning was profound; and all these talents were adorned with an elocution that was irresistible.

To the assemblage of so many gifts from nature, it was expected that art would soon give her finishing hand; and that a youth, begun in excellence, would soon arrive at perfection: but such is the perverseness of human nature, that an age which should have been employed in the acquisition of knowledge, was dissipated in pleasure; and instead of aiming to excel in praise-worthy pursuits, Bolingbroke seemed more ambitious of being thought the greatest rake about town. This period might have been compared to that of fermentation in liquors, which grow muddy before they brighten; but it must also be confessed, that those liquors which never ferment are seldom clear. In this state of disorder, he was not without his lucid intervals; and even while he was noted for keeping Miss Gumley, the most expensive prostitute in the kingdom, and bearing the greatest quantity of wine without intoxication, he even then despised his

paltry ambition. "The love of study," says he, "and desire of knowledge, were what I felt all my life; and though my genius, unlike the demon of Socrates, whispered so softly that very often I heard him not in the hurry of those passions with which I was transported, yet some calmer hours there were, and in them I hearkened to him." These sacred admonitions were indeed very few, since his excesses are remembered to this very day. I have spoken to an old man, who assured me, that he saw him and one of his companions run naked through the park in a fit of intoxication; but then it was a time when public decency might be transgressed with less danger than at present.

During this period all his attachments were to pleasure, so his studies only seemed to lean that way. His first attempts were in poetry, in which he discovers more wit than taste, more labour than harmony in his versification. We have a copy of his verses prefixed to Dryden's Virgil, complimenting the poet, and praising his translation. We have another, not so well known, prefixed to a French work, published in Holland by the Chevalier de St. Hyacinth, entitled, *Le Chef de Oeuvre d'un Inconnu*. This performance is a humorous piece of criticism upon a miserable old ballad; and Bolingbroke's compliment, though written in English, is printed in Greek characters, so that at the first glance it may deceive the eye, and be mistaken for real Greek. There are two or three things more of his composition, which have appeared since his death, but which do honour neither to his parts nor memory.

In this mad career of pleasure he continued for some time; but at length in 1700, when he arrived at the twenty-eighth year of his age, he began to dislike his method of living, and to find that sensual pleasure alone was not sufficient to make the happiness of a reasonable creature. He therefore made his first effort to break from his state of infatuation, by marrying the daughter and coheir of Sir Henry Winchescomb, a descendant from the famous Jack of Newbury, who, though but a clothier in the reign of Henry VIII was able to entertain the King and all his retinue in the most splendid manner. This lady was possessed of a fortune exceeding forty thousand pounds, and was not deficient in mental accomplishments; but whether he was not yet fully satiated with his former pleasures, or whether her temper was not conformable to his own, it is certain they were far from living happily together. After cohabiting for some time together, they parted by mutual consent, both equally displeased; he complaining of the obstinacy of her temper, she of the shamelessness of his infidelity. A great part of her fortune some time after, upon his attainder, was given her back: but, as her family estates were settled upon him, he enjoyed them after her death, upon the reversal of his attainder.

Having taken a resolution to quit the allurements of pleasure for the stronger attractions of ambition, soon after his marriage he procured a seat in the House of Commons, being elected for the borough of Wotton-

Basset in Wiltshire, his father having served several times for the same place. Besides his natural endowments and his large fortune, he had other very considerable advantages that gave him weight in the senate, and seconded his views of preferment. His grandfather Sir Walter St. John was still alive; and that gentleman's interest was so great in his own county of Wilts, that he represented it in two Parliaments in a former reign. His father also was then the representative for the same; and the interest of his wife's family in the house was very extensive. Thus Bolingbroke took his seat with many accidental helps, but his chief and great resource lay in his own extensive abilities.

At that time the whig and the tory parties were strongly opposed in the house and pretty nearly balanced. In the latter years of King William, the tories, who from every motive were opposed to the court, had been gaining popularity, and now began to make a public stand against their competitors. Robert Harley, afterwards earl of Oxford, a staunch and confirmed tory, was in the year 1700 chosen speaker of the House of Commons, and was continued in the same upon the accession of Queen Anne, in the year ensuing. Bolingbroke had all along been bred up, as was before observed, among the dissenters, his friends leaned to that persuasion, and all his connexions were in the whig interest. However, either from principle, or from perceiving the tory party to be then gaining ground, while the whigs were declining, he soon changed his connexions, and joined himself to Harley, for whom then he had the greatest esteem; nor did he bring him his vote alone, but his opinion, which even before the end of his first session, he rendered very considerable, the house perceiving even in so young a speaker the greatest eloquence, united with the profoundest discernment. The year following he was again chosen anew for the same borough, and persevered in his former attachments, by which he gained such an authority and influence in the house, that it was thought proper to reward his merit; and, on the 10th of April 1704, he was appointed Secretary at War, and of the Marine, his friend Harley having a little before been made Secretary of State.

The tory party being thus established in power, it may easily be supposed that every method would be used to depress the whig interest, and to prevent it from rising; yet so much justice was done even to merit in an enemy, that the Duke of Marlborough, who might be considered as at the head of the opposite party, was supplied with all the necessaries for carrying on the war in Flanders with vigour: and it is remarkable, that the greatest events of his campaigns, such as the battles of Blenheim and Ramilies, and several glorious attempts made by the Duke to shorten the war by some decisive action, fell out while Bolingbroke was Secretary at War. In fact, he was a sincere admirer of that great general, and avowed it upon all occasions to the last moment of his life: he knew his faults, he admired his virtues, and had the boast of being instrumental

in giving lustre to those triumphs, by which his own power was in a manner overthrown.

As the affairs of the nation were then in as fluctuating a state as at present, Harley, after maintaining the lead for above three years, was in his turn obliged to submit to the whigs, who once more became the prevailing party, and he was compelled to resign the seals. The friendship between him and Bolingbroke seemed at this time to have been sincere and disinterested; for the latter chose to follow his fortune, and the next day resigned his employments in the administration, following his friend's example, and setting an example at once of integrity and moderation. As an instance of this, when his coadjutors, the tories, were for carrying a violent measure in the House of Commons, in order to bring the Princess Sophia into England, Bolingbroke so artfully opposed it, that it dropt without a debate. For this his moderation was praised, but perhaps at the expense of his sagacity.

For some time the whigs seemed to have gained a complete triumph, and upon the election of a new parliament, in the year 1708, Bolingbroke was not returned. The interval which followed, of above two years, he employed in the severest study; and this recluse period he ever after used to consider as the most active and serviceable of his whole life. But his retirement was soon interrupted by the prevailing of his party once more; for the Whig parliament being dissolved in the year 1710, he was again chosen, and Harley being made Chancellor, and Under-treasurer of the Exchequer, the important post of Secretary of State was given to our author, in which he discovered a degree of genius and assiduity, that perhaps have never been known to be united in one person to the same degree.

The English annals scarcely produce a more trying juncture, or that required such various abilities to regulate. He was then placed in a sphere where he was obliged to conduct the machine of state, struggling with a thousand various calamities; a desperate enraged party, whose characteristic it has ever been to bear none in power but themselves; a war conducted by an able general, his professed opponent, and whose victories only tended to render him every day more formidable; a foreign enemy, possessed of endless resources, and seeming to gather strength from every defeat; an insidious alliance, that wanted only to gain the advantage of victory, without contributing to the expenses of the combat; a weak declining mistress that was led by every report, and seemed to listen to whatever was said against him; still more, a gloomy, indolent, and suspicious colleague, that envied his power, and hated him for his abilities: these were a part of the difficulties that Bolingbroke had to struggle with in office, and under which he was to conduct the treaty of peace of Utrecht, which was considered as one of the most complicated negotiations that history can afford. But nothing seemed too great for his abilities and

industry; he set himself to the undertaking with spirit; he began to pave the way to the intended treaty, by making the people discontented at the continuance of the war; for this purpose, he employed himself in drawing up accurate computations of the numbers of our own men, and that of foreigners, employed in its destructive progress. He even wrote in the *Examiners*, and other periodical papers of the times, showing how much of the burden rested upon England, and how little was sustained by those who falsely boasted their alliance. By these means, and after much debate in the House of Commons, the Queen received a petition from Parliament, showing the hardships the allies had put upon England in carrying on this war, and consequently how necessary it was to apply relief to so ill-judged a connexion. It may be easily supposed that the Dutch against whom this petition was chiefly levelled, did all that was in their power to oppose it; many of the foreign courts also, with whom he had any transactions, were continually at work to defeat the minister's intentions. Memorial was delivered after memorial; the people of England, the parliament, and all Europe, were made acquainted with the injustice and the dangers of such a proceeding; however, Bolingbroke went on with steadiness and resolution; and although the attacks of his enemies at home might have been deemed sufficient to employ his attention, yet he was obliged, at the same time that he furnished materials to the press in London, to furnish instructions to all our ministers and ambassadors abroad, who would do nothing but in pursuance of his directions. As an orator in the senate, he exerted all his eloquence, he stated all the great points that were brought before the house, he answered the objections that were made by the leaders of the opposition; and all this with such success, that even his enemies, while they opposed his power, acknowledged his abilities. Indeed, such were the difficulties he had to encounter, that we find him acknowledging himself some years after, that he never looked back on this great event, passed as it was, without a secret emotion of the mind, when he compared the vastness of the undertaking, and the importance of the success, with the means employed to bring it about, and with those which were employed to frustrate his intentions.

While he was thus industriously employed, he was not without the rewards that deserved to follow such abilities, joined to so much assiduity. In July, 1712, he was created Baron St. John of Lidyard Tregoze in Wiltshire, and Viscount Bolingbroke; by the last of which titles he is now generally known, and is likely to be talked of by posterity: he was also the same year appointed lord lieutenant of the county of Essex. By the titles of Tregoze and Bolingbroke, he united the honours of the elder and younger branch of his family; and thus transmitted into one channel the opposing interests of two races, that had been distinguished, one for their loyalty to king Charles I the other for their attachment to the parliament that opposed him. It was afterwards his boast, that he steered clear of

the extremes for which his ancestors had been distinguished, having kept the spirit of the one, and acknowledged the subordination that distinguished the other.

Bolingbroke, being thus raised very near the summit of power, began to perceive more clearly the defects of him who was placed there. He now began to find that Lord Oxford, whose party he had followed, and whose person he had esteemed, was by no means so able or so industrious as he supposed him to be. He now began from his heart to renounce the friendship he once had for his coadjutor: he began to imagine him treacherous, mean, indolent, and invidious; he even began to ascribe his own promotion to Oxford's hatred, and to suppose that he was sent up to the House of Lords only to render him contemptible. These suspicions were partly true, and partly suggested by Bolingbroke's own ambition: being sensible of his own superior importance and capacity, he could not bear to see another take the lead in public affairs, when they owed their chief success to his own management. Whatever might have been his motives, whether of contempt, hatred, or ambition, it is certain an irreconcilable breach began between these two leaders of their party; their mutual hatred was so great, that even their own common interest, the vigour of their negotiations, and the safety of their friends, were entirely sacrificed to it. It was in vain that Swift, who was admitted into their counsels, urged the unreasonable impropriety of their disputes; that while they were thus at variance within the walls, the enemy were making irreparable breaches without. Bolingbroke's antipathy was so great, that even success would have been hateful to him if Lord Oxford were to be a partner. He abhorred him to that degree, that he could not bear to be joined with him in any case; and even some time after, when the lives of both were aimed at, he could not think of concerting measures with him for their mutual safety, preferring even death itself to the appearance of a temporary friendship.

Nothing could have been more weak and injudicious than their mutual animosities at this juncture; and it may be asserted with truth, that men who were unable to suppress or conceal their resentments upon such a trying occasion, were unfit to take the lead in any measures, be their industry or their abilities ever so great. In fact, their dissensions were soon found to involve not only them, but their party in utter ruin: their hopes had for some time been declining, the whigs were daily gaining ground, and the Queen's death soon after totally destroyed all their schemes with their power.

Upon the accession of George I to the throne, danger began to threaten the late ministry on every side: whether they had really intentions of bringing in the Pretender, or whether the whigs made it a pretext for destroying them, is uncertain; but the king very soon began to show that they were to expect neither favour nor mercy at his hands. Upon his

landing at Greenwich, when the court came to wait upon him, and Lord Oxford among the number, he studiously avoided taking any notice of him, and testified his resentment by the caresses he bestowed upon the members of the opposite faction. A regency had been some time before appointed to govern the kingdom, and Addison was made secretary. Bolingbroke still maintained his place of state secretary, but subject to the contempt of the great and the insults of the mean. The first step taken by them to mortify him, was to order all letters and packets directed to the Secretary of State, to be sent to Mr. Addison; so that Bolingbroke was in fact removed from his office, that is, the execution of it, in two days after the Queen's death. But this was not the worst; for his mortifications were continually heightened by the daily humiliation of waiting at the door of the apartment where the regency sat, with a bag in his hand, and being all the time, as it were, exposed to the insolence of those who were tempted by their natural malevolence, or who expected to make their court to those in power by abusing him.

Upon this sudden turn of fortune, when the seals were taken from him, he went into the country; and having received a message from court to be present when the seal was taken from the door of the Secretary's office, he excused himself, alleging, that so trifling a ceremony might as well be performed by one of the under Secretaries, but at the same time requested the honour of kissing the King's hand, to whom he testified the utmost submission. This request, however, was rejected with disdain; the King had been taught to regard him as an enemy and threw himself entirely on the whigs for safety and protection.

The new parliament, mostly composed of whigs, met the 17th of March, and in the King's speech from the throne many inflaming hints were given, and many methods of violence chalked out to the two houses. "The first steps (says Lord Bolingbroke, speaking on this occasion) in both were perfectly answerable; and, to the shame of the peerage be it spoken, I saw at that time several Lords concur to condemn, in one general vote, all that they had approved in a former Parliament by many particular resolutions. Among several bloody resolutions proposed and agitated at this time, the resolution of impeaching me of high treason was taken, and I took that of leaving England, not in a panic terror, improved by the artifices of the Duke of Marlborough, whom I knew even at that time too well to act by his advice or information in any case, but on such grounds as the proceedings which soon followed sufficiently justified, and such as I have never repented building upon. Those who blamed it in the first heat, were soon after obliged to change their language: for what other resolution could I take? The method of prosecution designed against me would have put me out of a condition immediately to act for myself, or to serve those who were less exposed than me, but who were however in danger. On the other hand, how few were there on whose assistance I could

depend, or to whom I would even in these circumstances be obliged? The ferment in the nation was wrought up to a considerable height; but there was at that time no reason to expect that it could influence the proceedings in Parliament, in favour of those who should be accused: left to its own movement, it was much more proper to quicken than slacken the prosecutions; and who was there to guide its motions? The tories, who had been true to one another to the last, were a handful, and no great vigour could be expected from them; the whimsicals, disappointed of the figure which they hoped to make, began indeed to join their old friends. One of the principal among them, namely, the Earl of Anglesea, was so very good as to confess to me, that if the court had called the servants of the late Queen to account, and stopped there, he must have considered himself as a judge, and acted according to his conscience on what should have appeared to him; but that war had been declared to the whole tory party, and that now the state of things was altered. This discourse needed no commentary, and proved to me, that I had never erred in the judgment I made of this set of men. Could I then resolve to be obliged to them, or to suffer with Oxford? As much as I still was heated by the disputes, in which I had been all my life engaged against the whigs, I would sooner have chosen to owe my security to their indulgence, than to the assistance of the whimsicals; but I thought banishment, with all her train of evils, preferable to either."

Such was the miserable situation to which he was reduced upon this occasion: of all the number of his former flatterers and dependents, scarcely was one found remaining. Every hour brought fresh reports of his alarming situation, and the dangers which threatened him and his party on all sides. Prior, who had been employed in negotiating the treaty of Utrecht, was come over to Dover, and promised to reveal all he knew. The Duke of Marlborough planted his creatures round his Lordship, who artfully endeavoured to increase the danger; and an impeachment was actually preparing in which he was accused of high treason. It argued therefore no great degree of timidity in his Lordship, to take the first opportunity to withdraw from danger, and to suffer the first boilings of popular animosity to quench the flame that had been raised against him: Accordingly, having made a gallant show of despising the machinations against him, having appeared in a very unconcerned manner at the play-house in Drurylane, and having bespoke another play for the night ensuing; having subscribed to a new opera that was to be acted some time after, and talking of making an elaborate defence, he went off that same night in disguise to Dover, as a servant to Le Vigne, a messenger belonging to the French king; and there one William Morgan, who had been a captain in General Hill's regiment of dragoons, hired a vessel, and carried him over to Calais, where the Governor attended him in his coach, and carried him to his house with all possible distinction.

The news of Lord Bolingbroke's flight was soon known over the whole town; and the next day a letter from him to Lord Lansdowne was handed about in print, to the following effect:

"MY LORD.

"I LEFT the town so abruptly, that I had no time to take leave of you or any of my friends. You will excuse me, when you know that I had certain and repeated informations from some who are in the secret of affairs, that a resolution was taken, by those who have power to execute it, to pursue me to the scaffold. My blood was to have been the cement of a new alliance, nor could my innocence be any security, after it had once been demanded from abroad, and resolved on at home, that it was necessary to cut me off. Had there been the least reason to hope for a fair and open trial, after having been already prejudged unheard by the two houses of Parliament, I should not have declined the strictest examination. I challenge the most inveterate of my enemies to produce any one instance of a criminal correspondence, or the least corruption of any part of the administration in which I was concerned. If my zeal for the honour and dignity of my Royal Mistress, and the true interest of my country have any where transported me to let slip a warm or unguarded expression, I hope the most favourable interpretation will be put upon it. It is a comfort that will remain with me in all my misfortunes, that I served her Majesty faithfully and dutifully, in that especially which she had most at heart, relieving her people from a bloody and expensive war, and that I have also been too much an Englishman, to sacrifice the interests of my country to any foreign ally; and it is for this crime only that I am now driven from thence. You shall hear more at large from me shortly.

Yours," &c.

No sooner was it universally known that he was retired to France, than his flight was construed into a proof of his guilt; and his enemies accordingly set about driving on his impeachment with redoubled alacrity. Mr., afterwards Sir Robert Walpole, who had suffered a good deal by his attachment to the whig interest during the former reign, now undertook to bring in and conduct the charge against him in the House of Commons. His impeachment consisted of six articles, which Walpole read to the House, in substance as follows:—First, that whereas the Lord Bolingbroke had assured the Dutch ministers, that the Queen his mistress would make no peace but in concert with them, yet he had sent Mr. Prior to France that same year with proposals for a treaty of peace with that monarch, without the consent of the allies. Secondly, that he advised and promoted the making a separate treaty of convention with France, which was signed in September. Thirdly, that he disclosed to M. Mesnager, the French minister at London, this convention, which was the preliminary instruc-

tions to her Majesty's Plenipotentiaries at Utrecht. Fourthly, that her Majesty's final instructions to her Plenipotentiaries were disclosed by him to the Abbot Gualtier, who was an emissary of France. Fifthly, that he disclosed to the French the manner how Tournay in Flanders might be gained by them. And lastly, that he advised and promoted the yielding up Spain and the West Indies to the Duke of Anjou, then an enemy to her Majesty. These were urged by Walpole with great vehemence, and aggravated with all the eloquence of which he was master. He challenged any person in behalf of the accused, and asserted, that to vindicate, were in a manner to share his guilt. In this universal consternation of the tory party, none was for some time seen to stir; but at length General Ross, who had received favours from his Lordship, boldly stood up, and said, he wondered that no man more capable was found to appear in defence of the accused. However, in attempting to proceed, he hesitated so much, that he was obliged to sit down, observing, that he would reserve what he had to say to another opportunity. It may easily be supposed, that the whigs found no great difficulty in passing the vote for his impeachment through the House of Commons. It was brought into that House on the 10th of June, 1715, it was sent up to the House of Lords on the 6th of August ensuing, and in consequence of which he was attainted by them of high treason on the 10th of September. Nothing could be more unjust than such a sentence; but justice had been drowned in the spirit of party.

Bolingbroke, thus finding all hopes cut off at home, began to think of improving his wretched fortune upon the Continent. He had left England with a very small fortune, and his attainder totally cut off all resources for the future. In this depressed situation he began to listen to some proposals which were made by the Pretender, who was then residing at Barr, in France, and who was desirous of admitting Bolingbroke into his secret councils. A proposal of this nature had been made shortly after his arrival at Paris, and before his attainder at home; but, while he had yet any hopes of succeeding in England, he absolutely refused, and made the best applications his ruined fortune would permit, to prevent the extremity of his prosecution.

He had for some time waited for an opportunity of determining himself, even after he found it vain to think of making his peace at home. He let his Jacobite friends in England know that they had but to command him, and he was ready to venture in their service the little all that remained, as frankly as he had exposed all that was gone. At length, says he, talking of himself, these commands came, and were executed in the following manner. The person who was sent to me arrived in the beginning of July, 1715, at the place I had retired to in Dauphine. He spoke in the name of all his friends whose authority could influence me; and he brought word, that Scotland was not only ready to take arms, but under some sort of dissatisfaction to be withheld from beginning; that in England the people

were exasperated against the government to such a degree, that, far from wanting to be encouraged, they could not be restrained from insulting it on every occasion; that the whole tory party was become avowedly Jacobites; that many officers of the army and the majority of the soldiers, were well affected to the cause; that the city of London was ready to rise, and that the enterprises for seizing of several places were ripe for execution; in a word, that most of the principal tories were in concert with the Duke of Ormond: for I had pressed particularly to be informed whether his Grace acted alone, or if not, who were his council; and that the others were so disposed, that there remained no doubt of their joining as soon as the first blow should be struck. He added, that my friends were a little surprised to observe that I lay neuter in such a conjuncture. He represented to me the danger I ran of being prevented by people of all sides from having the merit of engaging early in this enterprise, and how unaccountable it would be for a man, impeached and attainted under the present government, to take no share in bringing about a revolution, so near at hand, and so certain. He entreated that I would defer no longer to join the Chevalier, to advise and assist in carrying on his affairs, and to solicit and negotiate at the Court of France, where my friends imagined that I should not fail to meet a favourable reception, and whence they made no doubt of receiving assistance in a situation of affairs so critical, so unexpected, and so promising. He concluded, by giving me a letter from the Pretender, whom he had seen in his way to me, in which I was pressed to repair without loss of time to Commercy; and this instance was grounded on the message which the bearer of the letter had brought me from England. In the progress of the conversation with the messenger, he related a number of facts, which satisfied me as to the general disposition of the people; but he gave me little satisfaction as to the measures taken to improve this disposition, for driving the business on with vigour, if it tended to a revolution, or for supporting it to advantage, if it spun into a war. When I questioned him concerning several persons whose disinclination to the government admitted no doubt, and whose names, quality, and experience, were very essential to the success of the undertaking, he owned to me that they kept a great reserve, and did at most but encourage others to act, by general and dark expressions. I received this account and this summons ill in my bed; yet, important as the matter was, a few minutes served to determine me. The circumstances wanting to form a reasonable inducement to engage did not excuse me; but the smart of a bill of attainder tingled in every vein, and I looked on my party to be under oppression, and to call for my assistance. Besides which, I considered first that I should be certainly informed, when I conferred with the Chevalier, of many particulars unknown to this gentleman; for I did not imagine that the English could be so near to take up arms as he represented them to be, on no other foundation than that which he exposed.

In this manner, having for some time debated with himself, and taken his resolution, he lost no time in repairing to the Pretender at Commercy, and took the seals of that nominal king, as he had formerly those of his potent mistress. But this was a terrible falling off indeed; the very first conversation he had with this weak projector, gave him the most unfavourable expectations of future success. He talked to me, says his Lordship, like a man who expected every moment to set out for England or Scotland, but who did not very well know for which: and when he entered into the particulars of his affairs, I found, that concerning the former he had nothing more circumstantial or positive to go upon, than what I have already related. But the Duke of Ormond had been for some time, I cannot say how long, engaged with the Chevalier: he had taken the direction of this whole affair, as far as it related to England, upon himself; and had received a commission for this purpose, which contained the most ample powers that could be given. But still, however, all was unsettled, undetermined, and ill understood. The Duke had asked from France a small body of forces, a sum of money and a quantity of ammunition: but to the first part of the request he received a flat denial, but was made to hope that some arms and some ammunition might be given. This was but a very gloomy prospect; yet hope swelled the depressed party so high, that they talked of nothing less than an instant and ready revolution. It was their interest to be secret and industrious; but, rendered sanguine by their passions, they made no doubt of subverting a government with which they were angry, and gave as great an alarm, as would have been imprudent at the eve of a general insurrection.

Such was the state of things when Bolingbroke arrived to take up his new office at Commercy; and although he saw the deplorable state of the party with which he was embarked, yet he resolved to give his affairs the best complexion he was able, and set out for Paris, in order to procure from that court the necessary succours for his new master's invasion of England. But his reception and negotiations at Paris were still more unpromising than those at Commercy; and nothing but absolute infatuation seemed to dictate every measure taken by the party. He there found a multitude of people at work, and every one doing what seemed good in his own eyes; no subordination, no order, no concert. The Jacobites had wrought one another up to look upon the success of the present designs as infallible; every meeting-house which the populace demolished, as he himself says, every little drunken riot which happened, served to confirm them in these sanguine expectations; and there was hardly one among them, who would lose the air of contributing by his intrigues to the restoration, which he took for granted would be brought about in a few weeks. Care and hope, says our author very humorously, sat on every busy Irish face; those who could read and write had letters to show, and those who had not arrived to this pitch of erudition had their secrets to

whisper. No sex was excluded from this ministry; Fanny Oglethorpe kept her corner in it; and Olive Trant, a woman of the same mixed reputation, was the great wheel of this political machine. The ridiculous correspondence was carried on with England by people of like importance, and who were busy in sounding the alarm in the ears of an enemy, whom it was their interest to surprise. By these means, as he himself continues to inform us, the government of England was put on its guard, so that before he came to Paris, what was doing had been discovered. The little armament made at Havre de Grace, which furnished the only means to the Pretender of landing on the coasts of Britain, and which had exhausted the treasury of St. Germain, was talked of publicly. The earl of Stair, the English minister at that city, very soon discovered its destination, and all the particulars of the intended invasion; the names of the persons from whom supplies came, and who were particularly active in the design, were whispered about at tea-tables and coffee-houses. In short, what by the indiscretion of the protectors, what by the private interests and ambitious views of the French, the most private transactions came to light; and such of the more prudent plotters, who supposed that they had trusted their heads to the keeping of one or two friends, were in reality at the mercy of numbers. Into such company, exclaims our noble writer, was I fallen for my sins. Still, however, he went on, steering in the wide ocean without a compass, till the death of Louis XIV and the arrival of the Duke of Ormond at Paris, rendered all his endeavours abortive: yet, notwithstanding these unfavourable circumstances, he still continued to despatch several messages and directions for England, to which he received very evasive and ambiguous answers. Among the number of these, he drew up a paper at Chaville, in concert with the Duke of Ormond, Marshal Berwick, and De Torcy, which was sent to England just before the death of the king of France, representing that France could not answer the demands of their memorial, and praying directions what to do. A reply to this came through the French secretary of state, wherein they declared themselves unable to say any thing, till they saw what turn affairs would take on the death of the king, which had reached their ears. Upon another occasion a message coming from Scotland to press the Chevalier to hasten their rising, he despatched a messenger to London to the earl of Mar, to tell him that the concurrence of England in the insurrection was ardently wished and expected: but, instead of that nobleman's waiting for instructions, he had already gone into the Highlands, and there actually put himself at the head of his clans. After this, in concert with the Duke of Ormond, he despatched one Mr. Hamilton, who got all the papers by heart for fear of a miscarriage, to their friends in England, to inform them that though the Chevalier was destitute of succour, and all reasonable hopes of it, yet he would land as they pleased in England or Scotland at a minute's warning; and therefore they might rise immediately

after they had sent despatches to him. To this message Mr. Hamilton returned very soon with an answer given by Lord Lansdowne, in the name of all the persons privy to the secret, that since affairs grew daily worse, and would not mend by delay, the malecontents in England had resolved to declare immediately, and would be ready to join the Duke of Ormond on his landing; adding, that his person would be as safe in England as in Scotland, and that in every other respect it was better he should land in England; that they had used their utmost endeavours, and hoped the western counties would be in a good posture to receive him; and that he should land as near as possible to Plymouth. With these assurances the duke embarked, though he had heard before of the seizure of many of his most zealous adherents, of the dispersion of many more, and the consternation of all; so that upon his arrival at Plymouth, finding nothing in readiness, he returned to Brittany. In these circumstances the Pretender himself sent to have a vessel got ready for him at Dunkirk, in which he went to Scotland, leaving Lord Bolingbroke all this while at Paris, to try if by any means some assistance might not be procured without which all hopes of success were at an end. It was during this negotiation upon this miserable proceeding, that he was sent for by Mrs. Trant (a woman who had for some time before ingratiated herself with the Regent of France, by supplying him with mistresses from England) to a little house in the Bois de Boulogne, where she lived with Mademoiselle Chausery, an old superannuated waiting-woman belonging to the Regent. By these he was acquainted with the measures they had taken for the service of the Duke of Ormond; although Bolingbroke, who was actually secretary to the negotiation, had never been admitted to a confidence in their secrets. He was therefore a little surprised at finding such mean agents employed without his privity, and very soon found them utterly unequal for the task. He quickly therefore withdrew himself from such wretched auxiliaries, and the Regent himself seemed pleased at his defection.

In the meantime the Pretender set sail from Dunkirk for Scotland; and though Bolingbroke had all along perceived that his cause was hopeless, and his projects ill-designed; although he had met with nothing but opposition and disappointment in his service; yet he considered that this of all others was the time he could not be permitted to relax in the cause. He now therefore neglected no means, forgot no argument which his understanding could suggest, in applying to the court of France; but his success was not answerable to his industry. The King of France, not able to furnish the Pretender with money himself, had written some time before his death to his grandson the King of Spain, and had obtained from him a promise of forty thousand crowns. A small part of this sum had been received by the Queen's treasurer at St. Germain's, and had been sent to Scotland, or employed to defray the expenses which were daily

making on the coast; at the same time Bolingbroke pressed the Spanish ambassador at Paris, and solicited the ministers at the court of Spain. He took care to have a number of officers picked out of the Irish troops which serve in France, gave them their routes, and sent a ship to receive and transport them to Scotland. Still, however, the money came in so slowly, and in such trifling sums, that it turned to little account, and the officers were on their way to the Pretender. At the same time he formed a design of engaging French privateers in the expedition, that were to have carried whatever should be necessary to send to any part of Britain in their first voyage, and then to cruise under the Pretender's commission. He had actually agreed for some, and had it in his power to have made the same bargain with others: Sweden on the one side, and Scotland on the other, could have afforded them retreats; and, if the war had been kept up in any part of the mountains, this armament would have been of the utmost advantage. But all his projects and negotiations failed by the Pretender's precipitate return, who was not above six weeks in his expedition, and flew out of Scotland even before all had been tried in his defence.

The expedition being in this manner totally defeated, Bolingbroke now began to think that it was his duty as well as interest to save the poor remains of the disappointed party. He never had any great opinion of the Pretender's success before he set off; but when this adventurer had taken the last step which it was in his power to make, our Secretary then resolved to suffer neither him, nor the Scots, to be any longer bubbles of their own credulity, and of the scandalous artifices of the French court. In a conversation he had with the Marshal de Huxelles, he took occasion to declare, that he would not be the instrument of amusing the Scots; and since he was able to do them no other service, he would at least inform them of what little dependence they might place upon assistance from France. He added, that he would send them vessels, which, with those already on the coast of Scotland, might serve to bring off the Pretender, the Earl of Mar, and as many others as possible. The Marshal approved his resolution, and advised him to execute it, as the only thing which was left to do; but in the meantime the Pretender landed at Graveline, and gave orders to stop all vessels, bound on his account to Scotland; and Bolingbroke saw him the morning after his arrival at St. Germain's, and he received him with open arms.

As it was the Secretary's business, as soon as Bolingbroke heard of his return, he went to acquaint the French court with it; when it was recommended to him to advise the Pretender to proceed to Barr with all possible diligence; and in this measure Bolingbroke entirely concurred. But the Pretender himself was in no such haste: he had a mind to stay some time at St. Germain's, and in the neighbourhood of Paris, and to have a private meeting with the Regent: he accordingly sent Bolingbroke to

solicit this meeting, who exerted all his influence in the negotiation. He wrote and spoke to the Marshal de Huxelles, who answered him by word of mouth, and by letters, refusing him by both, and assuring him that the Regent said the things which were asked were puerilities, and swore he would not see him. The Secretary, no ways displeased with his ill success, returned with this answer to his master, who acquiesced in this determination, and declared he would instantly set out for Lorraine, at the same time assuring Bolingbroke of his firm reliance on his integrity.

However, the Pretender, instead of taking post for Lorraine, as he had promised, went to a little house in the Bois de Boulogne, where his female ministers resided, and there continued for several days seeing the Spanish and Swedish ministers, and even the Regent himself. It might have been in these interviews that he was set against his new Secretary, and taught to believe that he had been remiss in his duty and false to his trust: Be this as it will, a few days after the Duke of Ormond came to see Bolingbroke, and, having first prepared him for the surprise, put into his hands a note directed to the duke, and a little scrip of paper directed to the Secretary: they were both in the Pretender's hand writing, and dated as if written by him on his way to Lorraine; but in this Bolingbroke was not to be deceived, who knew the place of his present residence. In one of these papers the Pretender declared that he had no farther occasion for the Secretary's service; and the other was an order to him to give up the papers in his office; all which, he observes, might have been contained in a letter-case of a moderate size. He gave the Duke the seals, and some papers which he could readily come at; but for some others, in which there were several insinuations, under the Pretender's own hand, reflecting upon the Duke himself, these he took care to convey by a safe hand, since it would have been very improper that the Duke should have seen them. As he thus gave up without scruple all the papers which remained in his hands, because he was determined never to make use of them, so he declared he took a secret pride in never asking for those of his own which were in the Pretender's hands; contenting himself with making the Duke understand, how little need there was to get rid of a man in this manner, who only wanted an opportunity to get rid of the Pretender and his cause. In fact, if we survey the measures taken on the one side, and the abilities of the man on the other, it will not appear any way wonderful that he should be disgusted with a party, who had neither principle to give a foundation to their hopes, union to advance them, nor abilities to put them in motion.

Bolingbroke, being thus dismissed from the Pretender's service, supposed that he had got rid of the trouble and the ignominy of so mean an employment at the same time; but he was mistaken: he was no sooner rejected from the office than articles of impeachment were preferred against him, in the same manner as he had before been impeached in

England, though not with such effectual injury to his person and fortune. The articles of his impeachment by the Pretender were branched out into seven heads, in which he was accused of treachery, incapacity, and neglect. The first was, that he was never to be found by those who came to him about business; and if by chance or stratagem they got hold of him, he affected being in a hurry, and by putting them off to another time, still avoided giving them any answer. The second was, that the Earl of Mar complained by six different messengers at different times, before the Chevalier came from Dunkirk, of his being in want of arms and ammunition, and prayed a speedy relief; and though the things demanded were in my Lord's power, there was not so much as one pound of powder in any of the ships which by his Lordship's directions parted from France. Thirdly, the Pretender himself after his arrival sent General Hamilton to inform him, that his want of arms and ammunition was such, that he should be obliged to leave Scotland, unless he received speedy relief; yet Lord Bolingbroke amused Mr Hamilton twelve days together, and did not introduce him to any of the French ministers, though he was referred to them for a particular account of affairs; or so much as communicated his letters to the Queen, or any body else. Fourthly, the Count de Castle Blanco had for several months at Havre a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition, and did daily ask his Lordship's orders how to dispose of them, but never got any instructions. Fifthly, the Pretender's friends at the French court had for some time past no very good opinion of his Lordship's integrity, and a very bad one of his discretion. Sixthly, at a time when many merchants in France would have carried privately any quantity of arms and ammunition into Scotland, his Lordship desired a public order for the embarkation, which being a thing not to be granted, is said to have been done in order to urge a denial. Lastly, the Pretender wrote to his Lordship by every occasion after his arrival in Scotland; and though there were many opportunities of writing in return, yet from the time he landed there, to the day he left it, he never received any letter from his Lordship. Such were the articles, by a very extraordinary reverse of fortune, preferred against Lord Bolingbroke, in less than a year after similar articles were drawn up against him by the opposite party at home. It is not easy to find out what he could have done thus to disoblige all sides; but he had learned by this time to make out happiness from the consciousness of his own designs, and to consider all the rest of mankind as uniting in a faction to oppress virtue.

But though it was mortifying to be thus rejected on both sides, yet he was not remiss in vindicating himself from all. Against these articles of impeachment, therefore, he drew up an elaborate answer, in which he vindicates himself with great plausibility. He had long, as he asserts, wished to leave the Pretender's service, but was entirely at a loss how to conduct himself in so difficult a resignation; but at length, says he, the

Pretender and his council disposed of things better for me, than I could have done for myself. I had resolved, on his return from Scotland, to follow him till his residence should be fixed somewhere; after which, having served the tories in this, which I looked upon as their last struggle for power, and having continued to act in the Pretender's affairs till the end of the term for which I embarked with him, I should have esteemed myself to be at liberty, and should, in the civilest manner I was able, have taken my leave of him. Had we parted thus, I should have remained in a very strange situation all the rest of my life; on one side he would have thought that he had a right on any future occasion to call me out of my retreat, the tories would probably have thought the same thing, my resolution was taken to refuse them both, and I foresaw that both would condemn me: on the other side, the consideration of his having kept measures with me, joined to that of having once openly declared for him, would have created a point of honour, by which I should have been tied down, not only from ever engaging against him, but also from making my peace at home. The Pretender cut this Gordian knot asunder at one blow: he broke the links of that chain which former engagements had fastened on me, and gave me a right to esteem myself as free from all obligations of keeping measures with him, as I should have continued if I had never engaged in his interest.

It is not to be supposed that one so very delicate to preserve his honour, would previously have basely betrayed his employer: a man conscious of acting so infamous a part, would have undertaken no defence, but let the accusations, which could not materially affect him, blow over, and wait for the calm that was to succeed in tranquillity. He appeals to all the ministers with whom he transacted business, for the integrity of his proceedings, at that juncture; and had he been really guilty, when he opposed the ministry here after his return, they would not have failed to brand and detect his duplicity. The truth is, that he perhaps was the most disinterested minister at that time in the Pretender's court; as he had spent great sums of his own money in his service, and never would be obliged to him for a farthing, in which case he believes that he was single. His integrity is much less impeachable on this occasion than his ambition; for all the steps he took may be fairly ascribed to his displeasure at having the Duke of Ormond and the Earl of Mar treated more confidentially than himself. It was his aim always to be foremost in every administration, and he could not bear to act as a subaltern in so paltry a court as that of the Pretender.

At all periods of his exile,* he still looked towards home with secret regret; and had even taken every opportunity to apply to those in power, either to soften his prosecutions, or lessen the number of his enemies at home. In accepting his office under the Pretender, he made it a condition to be at liberty to quit the post whenever he should think proper; and

being now disgracefully dismissed, he turned his mind entirely towards making his peace in England, and employing all the unfortunate experience he had acquired to undeceive his tory friends, and to promote the union and quiet of his native country. It was not a little favourable to his hopes, that about this time, though unknown to him, the Earl of Stair, ambassador to the French court, had received full power to treat with him whilst he was engaged with the Pretender; but yet had never made him any proposals, which might be considered as the grossest outrage. But when the breach with the Pretender was universally known, the Earl sent one Monsieur Saludin, a gentleman of Geneva, to Lord Bolingbroke, to communicate to him his Majesty King George's favourable disposition to grant him a pardon, and his own earnest desire to serve him as far as he was able. This was an offer by much too advantageous for Bolingbroke in his wretched circumstances to refuse; he embraced it, as became him to do, with all possible sense of the king's goodness, and of the ambassador's friendship. They had frequent conferences shortly after upon the subject. The turn which the English ministry gave the matter, was to enter into a treaty to reverse his attainder, and to stipulate the conditions on which this act of grace should be granted him: but this method of negotiation he would by no means submit to; the notice of a treaty shocked him, and he resolved never to be restored, rather than go that way to work. Accordingly he opened himself without any reserve to Lord Stair, and told him, that he looked upon himself obliged in honour and conscience to undeceive his friends in England, both as to the state of foreign affairs, as to the management of the Jacobite interest abroad, and as to the characters of the persons; in every one of which points he knew them to be most grossly and most dangerously deluded. He observed, that the treatment he had received from the Pretender and his adherents, would justify him to the world in doing this; that, if he remained in exile all his life, he might be assured that he would never have more to do with the Jacobite cause; and that, if he were restored, he would give it an effectual blow, in making that apology which the Pretender had put him under a necessity of making; that in doing this, he flattered himself that he should contribute something towards the establishment of the king's government, and to the union of his subjects. He added, that if the court thought him sincere in those professions, a treaty with him was unnecessary; and, if if they did not believe so, then a treaty would be dangerous to him. The Earl of Stair, who has also confirmed this account of Lord Bolingbroke's, in a letter to Mr. Craggs, readily came into his sentiments on this head, and soon after the King approved it upon their representations; he accordingly received a promise of pardon from George I who, on the 2d of July 1716, created his father Baron of Battersea, in the county of Surrey, and Viscount St. John. This seemed preparatory to his own restoration; and, instead of prosecuting any farther ambitious schemes against the

government, he rather began to turn his mind to philosophy; and since he could not gratify his ambition to its full extent, he endeavoured to learn the art of despising it. The variety of distressful events that had hitherto attended all his struggles, at last had thrown him into a state of reflection, and this produced, by way of relief, a *consolatio philosophica*, which he wrote the same year, under the titles of Reflections upon exile. In this peace in which he professes to imitate the manner of Seneca, he with some wit draws his own picture, and represents himself as suffering persecution, for having served his country with abilities and integrity. A state of exile thus incurred, he very justly shows to be rather honourable than distressful; and indeed there are few men who will deny, that the company of strangers to virtue, is better than the company of enemies to it. Besides this philosophical tract, he also wrote this year several letters, in answer to the charges laid upon him by the Pretender and his adherents; and the following year he drew up a vindication of his whole conduct with respect to the tories, in the form of a letter to Sir William Windham.

Nor was he so entirely devoted to the fatigues of business, but that he gave pleasure a share in its pursuits. He had never much agreed with the lady he first married, and after a short cohabitation they separated, and lived ever after asunder. She therefore remained in England upon his going into exile, and by proper application to the throne, was allowed a sufficient maintenance to support her with becoming dignity: however, she did not long survive his first disgrace; and upon his becoming a widower he began to think of trying his fortune once more in a state which was at first so unfavourable. For this purpose he cast his eye on the widow of the Marquis of Villette, a niece to the famous Madam Maintenon; a young lady of great merit and understanding, possessed of a very large fortune, but encumbered with a long and troublesome lawsuit. In the company of this very sensible woman he passed his time in France, sometimes in the country, and sometimes at the capital, till the year 1723, in which, after the breaking up of the Parliament, his Majesty was pleased to grant him a pardon as to his personal safety, but as yet neither restoring him to his family inheritance, his title, nor a seat in Parliament.

To obtain this favour had been the governing principle of his politics for some years before; and upon the first notice of his good fortune, he prepared to return to his native country, where, however, his dearest connexions were either dead, or declared themselves suspicious of his former conduct in support of their party. It is observable that Bishop Atterbury, who was banished at this time for a supposed treasonable correspondence in favour of the tories, was set on shore at Calais, just when Lord Bolingbroke arrived there on his return to England. So extraordinary a reverse of fortune could not fail of strongly affecting that good prelate, who observed with some emotion, that he perceived himself to be exchanged; he presently left it to his auditors to imagine, whether his country were the loser or the gainer by such an exchange.

Lord Bolingbroke, upon his return to his native country, began to make very vigorous applications for farther favours from the crown: his pardon, without the means of support, was but an empty, or perhaps it might be called a distressful act of kindness, as it brought him back among his former friends in a state of inferiority his pride could not endure. However, his applications were soon after successful, for in about two years after his return he obtained an act of Parliament to restore him to his family inheritance, which amounted to nearly three thousand pounds a-year. He was also enabled by the same to possess any purchase he should make of any other estate in the kingdom; and he accordingly pitched upon a seat of Lord Tankerville's, at Dawley, near Uxbridge in Middlesex, where he settled with his lady, and laid himself out to enjoy the rural pleasures in perfection, since the more glorious ones of ambition were denied him. With this resolution he began to improve his new purchase in a very peculiar style, giving it all the air of a country farm, and adorning even his hall with all the implements of husbandry. We have a sketch of his way of living in this retreat in a letter of Pope's to Swift, who omits no opportunity of representing his Lordship in the most amiable points of view. This letter is dated from Dawley, the country farm above-mentioned, and begins thus: "I now hold the pen for my Lord Bolingbroke, who is reading your letter between two hay-cocks; but his attention is somewhat diverted, by casting his eyes on the clouds, not in the admiration of what you say, but for fear of a shower. He is pleased with your placing him in the triumvirate between yourself and me; though he says he doubts he shall fare like Lepidus, while one of us runs away with all the power like Augustus, and another with all the pleasure, like Anthony. It is upon a foresight of this, that he has fitted up his farm, and you will agree that this scheme of retreat is not founded upon weak appearances. Upon his return from Bath, he finds all peccant humours are purged out of him; and his great temperance and economy are so signal, that the first is fit for my constitution, and the latter would enable you to lay up so much money as to buy a bishopric in England. As to the return of his health and vigour, were you here, you might inquire of his haymakers; but as to his temperance, I can answer that for one whole day we have had nothing for dinner but mutton broth, beans, and bacon, and a barn-door fowl. Now his Lordship is run after his cart, I have a moment left to myself to tell you, that I overheard him yesterday agree with a painter for two hundred pounds, to paint his country hall with rakes, spades, prongs, &c. and other ornaments, merely to countenance his calling this place a farm." What Pope here says of his engagements with a painter, was shortly after executed; the hall was painted accordingly in black crayons only, so that at first view it brought to mind the figures often seen scratched with charcoal, or the smoke of a candle, upon the kitchen walls of farm houses. The whole, however, produced a most striking effect,

and over the door at the entrance into it was this motto: *Satis beatus ruris honoribus*. His Lordship seemed to be extremely happy in his pursuit of moral tranquillity, and in the exultation of his heart, could not fail of communicating his satisfactions to his friend Swift. I am in my own farm, says he, and here I shoot strong and tenacious roots: I have caught hold of the earth, to use a gardener's phrase, and neither my enemies nor my friends will find it an easy matter to transplant me again.

There is not, perhaps, a stronger instance in the world than his Lordship, that an ambitious mind can never be fairly subdued, but will still seek for those gratifications which retirement can never supply. All this time he was mistaken in his passion for solitude, and supposed that to be the child of philosophy, which was only the effect of spleen: it was in vain that he attempted to take root in the shade of obscurity; he was originally bred in the glare of public occupation, and he secretly once more wished for transplantation. He was only a titular Lord, he had not been thoroughly restored; and, as he was excluded from a seat in the House of Peers, he burned with impatience to play a part in that conspicuous theatre. Impelled by this desire, he could no longer be restrained in obscurity, but once more entered into the bustle of public business, and disavowing all obligations to the minister, he embarked in the opposition against him, in which he had several powerful coadjutors: but previously he had taken care to prefer a petition to the House of Commons, desiring to be reinstated in his former emoluments and capacities. This petition at first occasioned very warm debates: Walpole, who pretended to espouse his cause, alleged that it was very right to admit him to his inheritance; and when Lord William Pawlet moved for a clause to disqualify him from sitting in either house, Walpole rejected the motion, secretly satisfied with a resolution which had been settled in the cabinet, that he should never more be admitted into any share of power. To this artful method of evading his pretensions, Bolingbroke was no stranger; and he was now resolved to shake that power, which thus endeavoured to obstruct the increase of his own: Taking, therefore, his part in the opposition with Pulteney, while the latter engaged to manage the House of Commons, Bolingbroke undertook to enlighten the people. Accordingly, he soon distinguished himself by a multitude of pieces, written during the latter part of George the First's reign, and likewise the beginning of that which succeeded. — These were conceived with great vigour and boldness; and now, once more engaged in the service of his country, though disarmed, gagged, and almost bound, as he declared himself to be, yet he resolved not to abandon his cause, as long as he could depend on the firmness and integrity of those coadjutors, who did not labour under the same disadvantages with himself. His letters in a paper called the *Craftsman*, were particularly distinguished in this political contest; and though several of the most expert politicians of the times joined in this paper,

his essays "were peculiarly relished by the public. However, it is the fate of things written to an occasion, seldom to survive that occasion: the Craftsman, though written with great spirit and sharpness, is now almost forgotten, although, when it was published as a weekly paper, it sold much more rapidly than even the Spectator. Beside this work he published several other separate pamphlets, which were afterwards reprinted in the second edition of his works, and which were very popular in their day. This political warfare continued for ten years, during which time he laboured with great strength and perseverance, and drew up such a system of politics, as some have supposed to be the most complete now existing. But, as upon all other occasions, he had the mortification once more to see those friends desert him, upon whose assistance he most firmly relied, and all that web of fine-spun speculation actually destroyed at once, by the ignorance of some and the perfidy of others. He then declared that he was perfectly cured of his patriotic frenzy; he fell out not only with Pulteney for his selfish views, but with his old friends the tories, for abandoning their cause as desperate; averring, that the faint and unsteady exercise of parts on one side, was a crime but one degree inferior to the iniquitous misapplication of them on the other. But he could not take leave of a controversy in which he had been so many years engaged, without giving a parting blow, in which he seemed to summon up all his vigour at once and where as the poet says,

Animam in vulnere posuit.

This inimitable piece is entitled, "A dissertation on Parties," and of all his masterly pieces it is in general esteemed the best.

Having finished this, which was received with the utmost avidity, he resolved to take leave, not only of his enemies and friends, but even of his country; and in this resolution, in the year 1736, he once more retired to France, where he looked to his native country with a mixture of anger and pity, and upon his former professing friends with a share of contempt and indignation. I expect little, says he, from the principal actors that tread the stage at present. They are divided, not so much as it seemed, and as they would have it believed, about measures: The true division is about their different ends. Whilst the minister was not hard pushed, nor the prospect of succeeding to him near, they appeared to have but one end, the reformation of the government. The destruction of the minister was pursued only as a preliminary, but of essential and indisputable necessity, to that end; but when his destruction seemed to approach, the object of his succession interposed to the sight of many, and the reformation of the government was no longer their point of view. They had divided the skin, at least in their thought, before they had taken the beast. The common fear of hastening his downfall for others made them all faint in the chase. It was this, and this alone that saved him and put off his evil day.

Such were his cooler reflections, after he had laid down his political pen to employ it in a manner, that was much more agreeable to his usual professions, and his approaching age. He had long employed the few hours he could spare, on subjects of a more general and important nature to the interests of mankind; but as he was frequently interrupted by the alarms of party, he made no great proficiency in his design. Still, however, he kept it in view, and he makes frequent mention in his letters to Swift, of his intentions to give metaphysics a new and useful turn. I know, says he in one of these, how little regard you pay to writings of this kind; but I imagine if you can like any, it must be those that strip metaphysics of all their bombast, keep within the sight of every well constituted eye, and never bewilder themselves, whilst they pretend to guide the reason of others.

Having now arrived at the sixtieth year of his age, and being blessed with a very competent share of fortune, he returned into France far from the noise and hurry of party; for his seat at Dawley was too near to devote the rest of his life to retirement and study. Upon his going to that country, as it was generally known that disdain, vexation, and disappointment had driven him there, many of his friends as well as his enemies supposed that he was once again gone over to the Pretender. Among the number who entertained this suspicion was Swift, whom Pope in one of his letters very roundly chides for harbouring such an unjust opinion. "You should be cautious," says he, "of censuring any motion or action of Lord Bolingbroke, because you hear it only from a shallow, envious, and malicious reporter. What you writ to me about him, I find, to my great scandal, repeated in one of yours to another. Whatever you might hint to me, was this for the profane? The thing, if true, should be concealed; but it is, I assure you, absolutely untrue in every circumstance. He has fixed in a very agreeable retirement near Fontainebleau, and makes it his whole business *vacare litteris*."

This reproof from Pope was not more friendly than it was true: Lord Bolingbroke was too well acquainted with the forlorn state of that party, and the folly of its conductors, once more to embark in their desperate concerns. He now saw that he had gone as far towards reinstating himself in the full possession of his former honours, as the mere dint of parts and application could go, and was at length experimentally convinced, that the decree was absolutely irreversible, and the door of the House of Lords finally shut against him. He therefore, at Pope's suggestion, retired merely to be at leisure from the broils of opposition, for the calmer pleasures of philosophy. Thus the decline of his life, though less brilliant, became more amiable; and even his happiness was improved by age, which had rendered his passions more moderate, and his wishes more attainable.

But he was far from suffering, even in solitude, his hours to glide away in torpid inactivity. That active restless disposition still continued to

actuate his pursuits; and having lost the season for gaining power over his contemporaries, he was now resolved upon acquiring fame from posterity. He had not been long in his retreat near Fontainebleau, when he began a course of letters on the study and use of history, for the use of a young nobleman. In these he does not follow the methods of St. Real and others who have treated on this subject, who make history the great fountain of all knowledge; he very wisely confines its benefits, and supposes them rather to consist in deducing general maxims from particular facts, than in illustrating maxims by the applications of historical passages. In mentioning ecclesiastical history, he gives his opinion very freely upon the subject of the divine original of the sacred books, which he supposes to have no such foundation. This new system of thinking, which he had always propagated in conversation, and which he now began to adopt in his more laboured compositions, seemed no way supported either by his acuteness or his learning. He began to reflect seriously on these subjects too late in life, and to suppose those objections very new and unanswerable which had been already confuted by thousands. "Lord Bolingbroke," says Pope, in one of his letters, "is above trifling; when he writes of any thing in this world, he is more than mortal. If ever he trifles, it must be when he turns divine."

In the mean time, as it was evident that a man of his active ambition, in choosing retirement when no longer able to lead in public, must be liable to ridicule in resuming a resigned philosophical air, in order to obviate the censure, he addressed a letter to Lord Bathurst upon the true use of retirement and study; in which he shows himself still able and willing to undertake the cause of his country, whenever its distresses should require his exertion. I have, says he, renounced neither my country, nor my friends; and by friends, I mean all those, and those alone, who are such to their country. In their prosperity they shall never hear of me; in their distress always. In that retreat wherein the remainder of my days shall be spent, I may be of some use to them, since even thence I may advise, exhort, and warn them. But upon this pursuit only, and having now exchanged the gay statesman for the grave philosopher, he shone forth with distinguished lustre. His conversation took a different turn from what had been usual with him; and as we are assured by Lord Orrery, who knew him, it united the wisdom of Socrates, the dignity and ease of Pliny, and the wit of Horace.

Yet still amid his resolutions to turn himself from politics, and to give himself up entirely to the calls of philosophy, he could not resist embarking once more in the debates of his country; and coming back from France, settled at Battersea, an old seat which was his father's, and had been long in the possession of the family. He supposed he saw an impending calamity, and though it was not in his power to remove, he thought it his duty to retard its fall. To redeem or save the nation from perdition,

he thought impossible, since national corruptions were to be purged by national calamities; but he was resolved to lend his feeble assistance to stem the torrent that was pouring in. With this spirit he wrote that excellent piece, which is entitled, "The Idea of a Patriot King"; in which he describes a monarch uninfluenced by party, leaning to the suggestions neither of whigs nor tories, but equally the friend and the father of all. Some time after, in the year 1749, after the conclusion of the peace two years before, the measures taken by the administration seemed not to have been repugnant to his notions of political prudence for that juncture: in that year he wrote his last production, containing reflections on the then state of the nation, principally with regard to her taxes and debts, and on the causes and consequences of them. This undertaking was left unfinished, for death snatched the pen from the hand of the writer.

Having passed the latter part of his life in dignity and splendour, his rational faculties improved by reflection, and his ambition kept under by disappointment, his whole aim seemed to have been to leave the stage of life, on which he had acted such various parts, with applause. He had long wished to fetch his last breath at Battersea, the place where he was born; and fortune, that had through life seemed to traverse all his aims, at last indulged him in this. He had long been troubled with a cancer in his cheek, by which excruciating disease he died on the verge of fourscore years of age. He was consonant with himself to the last; and those principles which he had all along avowed, he confirmed with his dying breath, having given orders that none of the clergy should be permitted to trouble him in his latest moments.

His body was interred in Battersea church with those of his ancestors; and a marble monument erected to his memory, with the following excellent inscription:

Here lies
HENRY ST. JOHN,
in the reign of Queen Anne
Secretary of War, Secretary of State,
and Viscount Bolingbroke:
in the days of King George I. and
King George II.
something more and better
His attachment to Queen Anne
exposed him to a long and severe persecution;
he bore it with firmness of mind;
he passed the latter part of his time at home,
the enemy of no national party,
the friend of no faction;
distinguished (under the cloud of a proscription,

which had not been entirely taken off)
 by zeal to maintain the liberty,
 and to restore the ancient prosperity,
 of Great Britain.

He died the 12th of December, 1751,
 aged 79.

In this manner lived and died Lord Bolingbroke, ever active, never depressed, ever pursuing fortune, and as constantly disappointed by her. In whatever light we view his character, we shall find him an object rather proper for our wonder than our imitation, more to be feared than esteemed, and gaining our admiration without our love. His ambition ever aimed at the summit of power, and nothing seemed capable of satisfying his immoderate desires; but the liberty of governing all things without a rival. With as much ambition, as great abilities, and more acquired knowledge than Cæsar, he wanted only his courage to be as successful; but the schemes his head dictated, his heart often refused to execute; and he lost the ability to perform, just when the great occasion called for all his efforts to engage.

The same ambition that prompted him to be a politician, actuated him as a philosopher. His aims were equally great and extensive in both capacities: unwilling to submit to any in the one, or any authority in the other, he entered the fields of science with a thorough contempt of all that had been established before him, and seemed willing to think every thing wrong, that he might show his faculty in the reformation. It might have been better for his quiet, as a man, if he had been content to act a subordinate character in the state; and it had certainly been better for his memory, as a writer, if he had aimed at doing less than he attempted. Wisdom in morals, like every other art or science, is an accumulation that numbers have contributed to increase; and it is not for one single man to pretend, that he can add more to the heap than the thousands that have gone before him. Such innovations more frequently retard than promote knowledge; their maxims are more agreeable to the reader, by having the gloss of novelty to recommend them, than those which are trite, only because they are true. Such men are, therefore, followed at first with avidity, nor is it till some time that their disciples begin to find their error. They often, though too late, perceive that they have been following a speculative inquiry, while they have been leaving a practical good: and while they have been practising the arts of doubting, they have been losing all firmness of principle, which might tend to establish the rectitude of their private conduct. As a moralist, therefore, Lord Bolingbroke, by having endeavoured at too much, seems to have done nothing; but as a political writer, few can equal, and none can exceed him. As he was a practical politician, his writings are less filled with those speculative

illusions, which are the result of solitude and seclusion. He wrote them with a certainty of their being opposed, sifted, examined, and reviled; he therefore took care to build them up of such materials as could not be easily overthrown: they prevailed at the times in which they were written, they still continue to the admiration of the present age, and will probably last for ever.

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF THE LATE RIGHT HON. HENRY
ST. JOHN, LORD VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

IN the name of God, whom I humbly adore, to whom I offer up perpetual thanksgiving, and to the order of whose providence I am cheerfully resigned: This is the Last Will and Testament of me, Henry St. John, in the reign of Queen Anne, and by her grace and favour Viscount Bolingbroke. After more than thirty years' proscription, and after the immense losses I have sustained by unexpected events in the course of it; by the injustice and treachery of persons nearest to me; by the negligence of friends, and by the infidelity of servants; As my fortune is so reduced at this time, that it is impossible for me to make such disposition, and to give such ample legacies as I always intended, I content therefore to give as follows:

My debts, and the expenses of my burial in a decent and private manner at Battersea, in the vault where my last wife lies, being first paid, I give to William Chetwynd of Stafford, Esq., and Joseph Taylor, of the Inner-Temple, London, Esq., my two assured friends, each of them one hundred guineas, to be laid out by them, as to each of them shall seem best, in some memorial, as the legacy of their departed friend; and I constitute them executors of this my will. The diamond ring which I wear upon my finger, I give to my old and long approved friend, the Marquis of Matignon, and after his decease, to his son, the Count de Gace, that I may be kept in the remembrance of a family whom I love and honour above all others.

Item, I give to my said executors the sum of four hundred pounds in trust, to place out the same in some of the public funds, or government securities, or any other securities, as they shall think proper, and to pay the interest or income thereof to Francis Arboneau, my valet-de-chambre, and Ann his wife, and the survivor of them; and after the decease of the survivor of them, if their son John Arboneau shall be living, and under the age of eighteen years, to pay the said interest or income to him, until he shall attain his said age, and then to pay the principal money, or assign the securities for the same, to him; but if he shall not be living at the decease of his father and mother, or shall afterwards die before his said age of eighteen years, in either of the said cases the said principal sum of four hundred pounds, and the securities for the same, shall sink into my personal estate, and be accounted part thereof.

Item, I give to my two servants, Marianne Tribon, and Remi Charnet, commonly called Picard, each one hundred pounds; and to every other servant living with me at the time of my decease, and who shall have lived with me two years or longer, I give one year's wages more than what shall be due to them at my death.

And whereas I am the author of the several books or tracts following, viz.

Remarks on the History of England, from the Minutes of Humphrey Oldcastle. In twenty-four letters.

A dissertation upon Parties. In nineteen letters to Caleb Danvers, Esq.

The Occasional Writer. Numb. 1, 2, 3.

The Vision of Camillick.

An Answer to the London Journal of December 21, 1728, by John Trot.

An Answer to the Defence of the Inquiry into the Reasons of the Conduct of Great Britain.

A final Answer to the Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication.

All which books or tracts have been printed and published; and I am also the author of

Four Letters on History, &c.

Which have been privately printed, and not published; but I have not assigned to any person or persons whatsoever the copy, or the liberty of printing or re-printing any of the said books, or tracts, or letters: Now I do hereby, as far as by law I can, give and assign to David Mallet, of Putney, in the county of Surry, Esquire, the copy and copies of all and each of the before-mentioned books, tracts, or letters, and the liberty of re-printing the same. I also give to the said David Mallet the copy and copies of all the manuscript books, papers, and writings, which I have written or composed, or shall write or compose, and leave at the time of my decease. And I further give to the said David Mallet, all the books which, at the time of my decease, shall be in the room called my library.

All the rest and residue of my personal estate, whatsoever and wheresoever, I give to my said executors; and hereby revoking all former wills, I declare this to be my last will and testament. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal the twenty-second day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty-one.

HENRY SAINT JOHN BOLINGBROKE.

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the said testator, as and for his last will and testament, in the presence of

OLIVER PRICE.

THOMAS HALL.

Proved at London the fifth day of March 1752, before the worshipful Robert Chapman, doctor of laws and surrogate, by the oaths of William Chetwynd and Joseph Taylor, Esquires, the executors named in the will to whom administration was granted, being first sworn duly to administer.

March,	WILLIAM LEGARD,	} Deputy Registers.
	PETER ST. ELOY,	
1752.	HENRY STEVENS,	

In Dr. Matty's *Life of Lord Chesterfield*, he mentions that he had seen Lord Bolingbroke for several months labouring under a cruel, and to appearance incurable disorder. A cancerous humour in his face made a daily progress; and the empirical treatment he submitted to not only hastened his end, but also exposed him to the most excruciating pain. He saw him, for the last time, the day before his tortures began. Though the unhappy patient, as well as his friend, did then expect that he should recover, and accordingly desired him not to come again till his cure was completed, yet he still took leave of him in a manner which showed how much he was affected. He embraced the Earl with tenderness, and said, "God, who placed me here, will do what he pleases with me hereafter, and he knows best what to do. May he bless you." And in a letter from Chesterfield to a lady of rank at Paris, he says, "I frequently see our friend Bolingbroke, but I see him with great concern. A humour he has long had in his cheek proves to be cancerous, and has made an alarming progress of late. Hitherto it is not attended with pain, which is all he wishes, for as to the rest he is resigned. Truly, a mind like his, so far superior to the generality, would have well deserved that nature should have made an effort in his favour as to the body, and given him an uncommon share of health and duration."

The last scene is thus lamented, in a letter to the same lady: — "Are you not greatly shocked, but I am sure you are, at the dreadful death of our friend Bolingbroke? The remedy has hastened his death, against which there was no remedy, for his cancer was not topical, but universal, and had so infected the whole mass of his blood, as to be incurable. What I most lament is, that medicines put him to exquisite pain; an evil I dread much more than death, both for my friends and myself. I lose a warm, an amiable, and instructive friend. I saw him a fortnight before his death, when he depended upon a cure, and so did I; and he desired I would not come any more till he was quite well, which he expected would be in ten or twelve days. The next day the great pains came on, and never left him till within two days of his death, during which he lay insensible. What a man! what extensive knowledge! what a memory! what eloquence! His passions, which were strong, were injurious to the delicacy of his sentiments; they were apt to be confounded together, and often willfully. The world will do him more justice now than in his lifetime."



Nineteenth Century Europe and the United States

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

1769-1821

By GEORGE BRANDES¹ (1842-1925)



IT IS now a hundred years since, with the campaign in France in 1814 and the battle of Waterloo in 1815, the Napoleonic period closed. The present war which engages the activities of three-quarters of the world and affects the destinies of the whole human race is, in the extent of territory involved, not unlike the wars of Napoleon, yet differing in high degree from them, not only in the immense masses of soldiery employed, but in the development of means of communication brought about since that time. Napoleon conducted warfare as had Alexander the Great more than two thousand years before, with infantry, with cavalry, with baggage trains upon the highways, and with ships at sea. If he desired a report for his representative at St. Petersburg, he was obliged to send his message by a courier on horseback, who returned six weeks later with the reply. His battles were fought in a day, at the most in two days. His campaigns were correspondingly short.

His whole reign was brief. He was consul a little over four years and as emperor he ruled in all ten years. Seldom has such a short period in history been so productive of activity and achievements, and so memorable.

I

The first time that Napoleon felt his plans sharply thwarted by circumstances was when he received the news of Dupont's capitulation of Baylen in 1808. From that time on, the unfailing good fortune which had borne him victoriously over all obstacles began deserting him.

Yet even as late as the beginning of October, 1812, Napoleon at Mos-

¹ Reprinted from *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century*, New York, 1923. Copyright, 1923, by the Thomas Y. Crowell Co., by whose permission it is here reprinted. Translated from the original Danish by Rasmus B. Anderson.

cow stood forth as the master of the European continent. His own personal fortunes had not yet suffered a reverse. He was forty-three years old, the emperor of France and the king of Italy. He had married an emperor's daughter and had an heir to his throne. His empire stretched from the coast of Holland to the Ionic isles, from Dantzic to the southernmost tip of Italy. He reigned as absolute monarch over a hundred million people. But on the 19th of October he began the retreat from Moscow, and in 1912 the centenary of this famous retreat was celebrated throughout Russia with great festivities, as if in commemoration of a great triumph of the Russian people. However, it can scarcely be doubted that had it been Napoleon's fortune to have established a foothold in Russia it would have been a blessing to the people of that country. The Russian serfs would then have been liberated a half century before they were. The religious liberties which the czar in his fear proclaimed in 1905 would have been a reality in 1812, and without doubt the Russian people would have been led into ways of freedom and prosperity such as have since been opened to the people of France.

But the collapse of the Russian Campaign gave the final blow to Napoleon's power. Within a year and a half after he entered Moscow his domain was restricted to the isle of Elba. A year after this he was a prisoner on the rock of St. Helena. The structure of power he had built up crumbled like a house of cards.

Nevertheless, his constructive achievements within the limits of France itself have remained standing to this day, for Napoleon was not only the heir of the Revolution, but the builder of its spirit into law. He did not bring about the great movement; this must be credited to the thinkers of the eighteenth century; but he made its fruits secure. He cast the glowing ore of the Revolution into forms of law and it became hard as shining bronze and impervious to attack. When the imperial power slipped from his hands he left behind him — as did Rome of old when its world dominion was lost — his code, which in large part, survives today.

The third French republic has undertaken the difficult task of transforming this code to meet new conditions; for instance, has replaced the Concordat with the Catholic Church with a separation of church and state, a great task rather clumsily executed, and which has not yet resulted in great good, but has rather had the effect of dividing the French people into two hostile camps.

Scarcely less distinct are the traces of Napoleon's influence seen outside of France where it has made obsolete old forms of government and justice.

II

In his first scene in "Faust" Goethe has coined the word "superman." It is a scornful designation of Faust.

In his days of supreme power Napoleon appeared indeed to be a superman.

In the course of the wars waged against him he came to be considered and pictured as a sort of "non-man," a being without human attributes. In the caricatures of the time, and particularly the English, he is frequently represented as the Devil himself, or with the Devil pointing toward him and saying: "This is my only begotten son in whom I am well pleased." Grundtvig, in 1814, published an old prophecy which pictured Napoleon as "the great Anti-Christ, or the final adversary." Since that time we have come to understand the human side of him.

After his fall every good attribute was denied him. He was simply a tyrant, an unparalleled butcher, a destroyer of human life on a great scale. And this is undeniable; 1,700,000 Frenchmen and 2,000,000 of other lands fell in the wars of the empire from 1804 to 1814.

It was asserted unqualifiedly that he was thoroughly false; that he lied in his bulletins, as set forth by a famous commentator; that he appropriated to himself the honors for victories won by his generals, for Augereau's exploit at Arcole; for Desaix's victory at Marengo, in spite of the fact that in this very bulletin he speaks of Desaix almost as Achilles did of Patroclus. He was charged with taking to himself the credit for the work of his jurists, that the Code Napoleon was the work of Portalis, forgetting the fact that Napoleon had himself driven these jurists almost to the point of weariness. He was charged with having dealt in great falsehoods in writing his memoirs at St. Helena; that his whole make-up was humbug. In Alfred de Vigny's famous story "Stello" the captive emperor is alternately presented as comedian and tragedian. It was reported that he made a study of tones and attitudes under the renowned Talma, when more certainly Talma impersonates him.

Even the military talent was denied him. In Chateaubriand's pamphlet, "Bonaparte and the Bourbons" Napoleon is pictured as an incapable general, who simply permitted his troops to take the offensive, who won victories, but entirely through the valor of his soldiers, and independent of his leadership. Thus Chateaubriand says: "What was there about this foreigner by which he could so delude the people of France? His gifts for warfare? Even of this claim he has now been stripped. Without doubt he has won many great battles. But aside from that, the more obscure general is more capable than he. People have deluded themselves with the idea that he has developed and perfected the art of war, when in truth he has carried it back to its beginning." (This passage has been incorporated by Flaubert in his collection relating to notable block-heads.)

Rumor had it that Napoleon was personally a coward. Chateaubriand, for instance, in *Mémoires d'Outretombe*, pictures his anxiety during his journey through France after his abdication at Fontainebleau, when he borrowed the uniform of an Austrian colonel, a Prussian helmet and a Russian cape. He trembled and changed colors at the least stir. But the

populace was then bent on tearing him to pieces. What wonder, then, that he who had often preserved the composure of a statue amid a rain of bullets should fear such a death!

In the German lampoons of the period of 1813-1814 he is uniformly designated as "coward," and every little German province, even Hesse-Darmstadt, took to itself the credit for his overthrow. In a Darmstadt soldier-song of the time I have found this passage:

Napoleon, du Schustergesell'!
Kujon, was läufest du so schnell?
Hättest du mit Darmstadt Frieden gemacht,
Du hättest es wahrlich weiter gebracht.

Even in France it was repeatedly asserted that in reality he was not French at all, but Italian, an alien. His name was Buonaparte. He lied, they declared in claiming he was born after the conquest of Corsica (1769); that he was a year older, hence born before the annexation of Corsica to France, and that he had permitted the official records at Ajaccio, containing the entry of his birth, to be falsified.

This assertion was untrue, although one may still hear it made by intelligent men in France. I have myself investigated these records and am convinced that their falsification would have been impossible. Carelessness in the spelling of surnames was at that time so great that "Bonaparte" is spelled differently, with and without "u," the two times in which the name, with a few intervening lines, occurs.

It is an article of faith in Germany that Napoleon was a liar. Certain it is that he, who was a politician, and, like the majority of politicians, without scruples, employed falsehood where it served his purposes. He was, moreover, a soldier, and as a Corsican had grown up in the belief that stratagem in warfare was as honorable as open conflict. Yet the care which he required of his subordinates in the use of deceit was shown in the sharp letter he sent the Count of Rovigo after the glorious victory at Montmirail and Vauxchamps in 1814, saying:

You must have lost your head in Paris since you have permitted it to go out that we here battled one against three, when I have proclaimed that I have 300,000 men, which the enemy believed, and which I must now reiterate to my disgust. In this way you destroy with a stroke of the pen all the good results of our victory. You should understand that an empty honor avails nothing, and that one of the first principles in war is to exaggerate your strength. But how can this be made clear to a poet who thinks only of flattering me and pleasing the national vanity.

Here also he lies from a sense of duty, foregoing the glory which a statement of the true facts would have brought him.

It is not necessary at this time to call attention to the violent and

obstinate in Napoleon's character, his power to win men and make them the agency of his causes. Again and again his crimes were pointed out, the terrible official murder of the Duke of Enghien, which he — even before he became emperor in 1804 — permitted, in order to terrify those opposing his royal ambitions; the like official murder of the book-dealer, Palm of Nuremberg in 1806, for publishing a book dealing with the downfall of Germany and the bad conduct of the French troops in Bavaria at the time; as also the execution, in 1810, of Andreas Hofer, the Tyrolean hero of liberty, over whom the weak emperor of Austria failed to extend a protecting hand.

The two last-named executions have been justified under the barbaric morals of warfare then prevailing, which also still prevail, and in even more deplorable form. The first one would appear to be unjustifiable, yet it may be noted that no less a personage than Goethe has defended it; yes, has even claimed that it required no defense. In a conversation which Goethe led at Wolzogen's table at Weimar, in October, 1808, he declared that the greatness and shrewdness of Napoleon was best revealed in the fact that he never lost sight of his goal. Other leaders indulged their sympathies or antipathies; but Napoleon never permitted himself to champion or oppose anything unless it tended to promote or retard his progress toward his goal. Whatever stood in his way was struck down. To Goethe it seemed entirely proper that Napoleon should permit a claimant to the throne like d'Enghien, or an agitator like Palm, to be shot in order that once for all examples might be made of them for terrifying the public, which everywhere disturbs the purposes of genius. And Goethe concludes (according to Falk's account): "Under trying circumstances, he contends with a corrupt century, among a corrupt people. Let us esteem him fortunate, both him and Europe, that with his mighty world projects he has not himself been corrupted."

Napoleon was considered, in 1815, by princes and peoples alike, as an absolute menace to the peace of Europe as long as he was free. Therefore, his imprisonment seemed justified, although there were few parallels then, as there are few now, for treating a captive monarch — particularly one who had surrendered of his own free will after losing a battle and abdicating his throne — as a criminal and not only holding him captive until peace had been declared but in lifelong imprisonment. The few faint parallels were those of Mary Stuart, who also relied upon an English government's magnanimity; and her husband Bothwell, who placed his faith in a Danish government's neutrality and magnanimity. We are accustomed to advise against building upon sand. Yet frequently this results in good; we have libeled the sand. It is upon magnanimity that we should never build.

III

In France, as outside of France, a great reaction set in against the July revolution, in France through Henri Beyle, through Victor Hugo (in his "Songs of Eastern Lands and Twilight Songs"); through Armand Carrel's articles; through Thiers, in his "History of the Consulate and the Empire" — unphilosophic, yet clear and greatly conceived — and finally in the songs of Beranger, among the pearls of which is *Les Souveniers du Peuple*, in which the story of the emperor is told through the lips of an old peasant woman. Here, with the eager exclamation: "And did he once speak to you, grandmother; did he speak to you?" he is presented as the beloved legendary hero, with his small three-cornered hat and his long gray coat.

Corresponding to this in Germany was Heinrich Heine's verse and prose, later Laube's and others. In the English-speaking world Napoleon did not have any admirers until late, although now he has many. Also, since he was the foe of England, he now has as many in Germany.

So great was the reaction of public sentiment in the Napoleonic revival during the reign of Louis Philippe that the government felt constrained to have Napoleon's body brought back from St. Helena by the king's own son, and his sarcophagus deposited under the dome of the Invalides.

Outside of France the deification of his memory was most strikingly exemplified by the Polish poets. To them, about 1830, Napoleon appeared as a supernatural being; an enigma which foiled all attempts at its solution. He had again awakened the natural conscience which had slumbered since the eighteenth century disasters. No mere human agencies, they felt, could overcome him, none except His Excellency General Frost and His Excellency General Hunger, in Russia. In the eyes of Mickiewicz and Krasinski, he becomes a demigod, a Messiah. His mission was to liberate the peoples; and in viewing St. Helena as a sort of second Golgatha, a ray from the passion of Christ is cast over Napoleon's captivity and death.

IV

In our own day the human side of Napoleon's make-up has been studied in an unfriendly spirit during the period of Napoleon III, when his foes sought to strike the nephew through the uncle, but in an unpartisan manner since. The "un-man" and the "super-man" have finally blended into a sort of demoniac figure whose origin makes clearer its outstanding attributes.

Napoleon was in origin a full-blooded Italian. In his early years the conquest of Corsica awakened in him a consuming hatred and bitterness toward the French. Although born a French subject, in character he was not French; he was late in learning to use the language like a native, and never learned to write French correctly, as revealed in his dictations. He

had a noble Roman cast of character, of pure transparency, with no gleam of French *esprit*.

His mother was a Cornelia, no French dame of the 18th century. There was in him an antique Roman element (his head reminds one of Augustus) and a far more pronounced Italian renaissance element. His family stock was Florentine; and he had certain elements in common with the Condottiere of the 15th century, a consuming energy, and from the beginning a relative indifference toward the cause he served if thereby he mainly served himself. Like warriors of other times, he had a stubborn will, unbending resolution, the faculty to seize the occasion and form a new resolution, when an earlier was found to appear impracticable. He never lost sight of his goal and he had the conspicuous political instinct of the Italian, the instinct for advantage and the means of shifting the political viewpoint so strikingly revealed in Machiavelli, in Giulio II, and in Mazarin (Giulio Mazarini). As one reads of his political negotiations with Alexander I, one sees, as it were, Italian finesse matched against Byzantine shiftiness and cunning.

In his union of the practical with an exalted fantasy, Napoleon resembles the great figures of the Italian renaissance. French genius has a modicum of simple sound sense, clear, but devoid of fancy. It finds its most conspicuous embodiment in Montaigne (half Jewish), in La Fontaine and Molière. The most purely French genius is marked by taste and tact; it is discriminating, as in Racine or Voltaire, or verbose as in Hugo. Bonaparte is genuine, not verbal, ardent, not discriminating. Of his taste not much can be said, but of his creative fantasy a great deal, and, like Michael Angelo, he was formed on colossal and grandiose lines.

While living at Cararra, in 1505, Michael Angelo discerned a cliff which seemed to dominate the shore. A fancy he had long indulged then seized him, to transform the whole cliff into a mighty heroic countenance. This corresponds to Napoleon's plan, in 1808, to lay the foundation for world dominion by attacking England from three directions at once, by way of Suez, from central Asia and by way of the cape. To this end fleets were to be fitted out in Brest, in the Loire, in Toulon, in Spezzia, in Genoa, in Vlissingen, in Boulogne, in Dunkirk, Havre, Cherbourg, Rochefort, Bordeaux, Ferrol, Lisbon and Carthage. The squadron from Toulon was to carry 20,000 men for the reconquest of Egypt; the fleet from Brest and the Loire was to land 18,000 men in India. The French-Russian army was to proceed directly to the Euphrates valley after dividing Turkey between France and Russia on its way. Plans for this great stroke were already under way when the revolution in Spain compelled Napoleon to postpone its execution.

With the bent in Napoleon's genius which is related to poetry and art — he not infrequently called himself an artist — he was more Italian than French. His genius has that mathematical structure which underlies

Dante's "Divina Commedia," with its strong symmetrical architecture, and has also the gigantic conception so early shown in Michael Angelo, who nevertheless could picture the little David in his conflict with Goliath.

When Bonaparte, in spite of his Italian blood, had attained to sovereignty over France, a new instance was given of the peculiar law by virtue of which those who have risen to high influence in a country are frequently of foreign birth.

V

Napoleon's personality cannot be understood without a consideration of the circumstances which made its development possible. There are three factors; Corsica, the French Revolution, and the French army. The powers which were to come to full fruition in him had long been accumulating in secret in the island of his birth, the unbridled energy of ancient and medieval ages, which in later times has been absent in Italian politics and government, was preserved in the lonely and wild Island of Corsica. The form which this energy took among his countrymen then was that of the blood feud, and more commonly banditry, while in Bonaparte it became ambition, desire for power. In Iceland, which furnishes a mild parallel, this heathen energy disappeared much quicker and no great man marks the newer time. In Corsica this energy became personified.

This desire for power found soil where it could strike deep roots and grow to the greatest heights, when the French revolution, towards the end of the 18th century, had swept away all the old moorings of society and then with great enthusiasm had established a new order which was later followed by complete lawlessness. No one was any longer secure in life or property, and justice was the stock in trade of the political dilettante. One of Bonaparte's first political experiences was in the suppression of the Revolution of 1795. Under his directory France was no longer revolutionary but was revolutionized. A general disorder prevailed, with highway robbery as a marked feature. France longed for a man of power, an organizer.

A mass of prohibitory decrees and enactments were in force in 1798. Relatives of emigrants and former members of the nobility were shut out from the suffrage. The spokesmen of parliament were revolutionists voicing the temper of the government. The people in the provinces were helpless; if anyone absented himself for a fixed time from his local commune his name was placed upon the emigrant list. The press was muzzled. The owners and editors of thirty-five newspapers were deported and all newspapers were under political censorship. Religious worship was free on paper, but any priest could be deported forthwith. Freedom of assembly was likewise found only on paper, while freedom of person was, in effect, abolished, since anyone was liable to arrest at any time. The former members of the nobility who remained upon their estates were not only sub-

jected to plunder by tax collectors, but to abuses without number. So hostile was the government to the church, that the decree that the peasants could not dance on Sunday was revoked. Naturally the instinct for freedom turned toward revolution.

On the other side, there was no longer any ruling class in society but unbounded possibilities for advancement step by step. This situation with all its teeming possibilities France offered to Napoleon and thus made possible his elevation and his historical significance.

Next to Corsica and the Revolution as factors in Napoleon's development, comes the fact that he was of military bent and a military genius. While the civil order had fallen apart and the earlier restraints of society were shattered, there was still unity in the army, still discipline, efficiency and respect. The spirit of revolution had permeated the army with its enthusiasm and with its evils, yet no one dared suggest the destruction of the army, particularly since from the first it had been victorious. The military spirit became one of the forms of the revolutionary spirit.

The motto of the Revolution had been "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" Liberty did not permit of equality; equality did not comprehend liberty, since equality can only be brought about by force. Of fraternity there was little, except in the army.

VI

When France, after 1799, accepted Bonaparte as a dictator, although a ten-year revolution had been waged in order to throw off the yoke of tyranny, it became apparent that of the two slogans, "liberty" and "equality," under which the revolution had been accomplished, equality was considered much more precious than liberty. It is possible to criticise Bonaparte for not having made liberty secure, but he cannot be said to have destroyed it, for it was not to be found. The Jacobins had deified the word and destroyed the thing.[†] Bonaparte held as an unassailable principle the right of everyone to rise to the highest possible place, if he were industrious and courageous. He did more than recognize equality; he honored it. He made the name dear to Frenchmen and by employing the plebiscite three times he established the revolutionary principles of the sovereignty of the people.

Even before his time the privileges of birth and wealth had been abolished, yet he extended none to the Jacobins. Napoleon protected the persecuted emigrants and their relatives, the nobility, the converts from the old order, and appointed them, as well as the republicans, to whatever positions they could fill. In this way he mollified the conservatives.

But he also made secure the new property rights for the benefit of citizen and peasant which had been wrung from them by the church and the nobility. Those who had established the Republic and survived the Revolution usually enjoyed the fruits of their works and deeds. Napoleon

gave them this satisfaction. In this way he satisfied the revolutionists. The new freedom supplanting the old, which had never really been established, was now brought into being. All avenues were open for industry, the right of birth, courage, enterprise, talent, genius were free to expand.

To Europe's kaisers, kings and princesses the Revolution was naturally a thing of terror, they dreamed only of restoring the old order in France, in order that such an upheaval should not smite Europe and spread to all their lands. Napoleon secured the practises of the new time, the abolition of caste and privilege, separation of church and state, the rights of men and the new economic order against the opposition of Europe which formed one coalition after another against him.

What is more, wherever his campaign led him he took with him the spirit of the new time. He put an end to the Inquisition in Spain; he brought human rights to the Jews of Germany. He established the Code Napoleon with its liberal principles in the Rhine provinces, and in Russian Poland where despite all vicissitudes it still exists. In this manner did the man who subdued the revolution at home extend the principles of the revolution in all directions abroad.

When he had been elevated to power France expected two things of him, peace within and peace with the outside world. He did not bring about either.

He regarded a political peace with fear, yet was solicitous about preserving its form. He never condemned it, and in the end gave it approval with "*L'Acte Additionel*," in 1815.

Nor did he bring about peace with his neighbors. The policy of England, which again and again inflamed Europe against him, and his own strenuous temperament, precluded this. Yet he has the great distinction of having established tranquillity in France. He fused the people together again who had been divided by factions, and reestablished the national unity. The respect for law and order had been lost; he brought it back to the French people. He could not establish quiet at home by permitting license. Only by the exercise of strong authority could he do so. Therefore, although he directed his army to wear mourning at the death of Washington, he could not himself be a Washington. Nor could he be a Cæsar, although frequently called one. He lacked the superb abandon of Cæsar and revealed none of Cæsar's grace and elegance. He became Napoleon, a new type, alone of his kind.

VII

With decisive energy Napoleon suppressed all opposition which sprang up against him. He unified France. He promoted equality. He made secure the fruits of the revolution's economic upheaval and extended its ideas throughout Europe.

By what faculties? By an intuition for grasping the real, the concrete, the kernel of the thing, which comes like a flash to decisive natures.

He had primarily the instinct of the artilleryman. He recognized the importance of having the greatest strength at the decisive point and at the decisive moment.

He comes as an obscure young officer to Toulon, a city then hostile to the revolution and protected against the French army by an English fleet. He sees at a glance that the high point L'Eguillette is the key to the capture of the city, as it commands the larger and smaller roadsteads of the city. He asks the authority to take it. The attempt is made by the eager lieutenant and but 300 men. It fails and the English then drag a whole park of artillery to its top. Nevertheless, he asks permission to attempt it again, and succeeds.

This achievement reveals his genius as a commander. He showed the same penetration as lawgiver, as administrator, and in his dealings with men, the ability to pierce to the heart of things. For a long time he was able to overcome all obstacles through this capacity for grasping essentials (which first failed him when unparalleled prosperity turned his head) through the astonishing comprehension and alertness of his mind, his capacity for prompt judgment and conclusions.

As first consul he had in his offices in the Tuileries, which was a laboratory, as it were, with workshop and tools, a bookcase marked "*Etats de Situation*" (material on the military and financial situation at the time). There were found bundles of documents, account books and appointment schedules. Admirers who have sought to convey an idea of his extraordinary powers have asserted that he also carried all this material in his head. It was from these books that the spy Michel for ten years sent information to Russia, a discovery not made until 1812.

There was in Napoleon's mind, as Taine had said, three stores of supervisory intelligence. Each consisted, it might be said, of a thick mental ledger which always was kept *a jour*.

The first collection was military and included a great atlas, of a topographical character, with the dispositions of all armies and fleets and the possibilities of their transformation and employment at the time — regiments, batteries, ships of the line and frigates, clothing, supply stations and their contents, horses, wagons, weapons and food.

The next grouping related to civil and financial matters at the moment, all the routine as well as the unusual receipts and expenditures, the taxes in France, war levies on other countries, the national debt, loans and bonds, public works, and all the train of public officials, senators, deputies, ministers and judges.

The third mental collection was a great encyclopedia, as it were, containing the conditions of life and the characteristics of each of the peoples over which he ruled, or against which he was making war; every class or group and every prominent man among the thousands upon thousands that he knew, was duly entered and labeled.

In 1812 he ruled personally 70,000 square miles, the greater part of Europe, and had the whole with all its details as to conditions and administration in hand. His unparalleled correspondence is evidence of this fact. In the thirty-two folios of his letters published under direction of Napoleon III, none is included the publication of which might be regarded as impolitic.

Among the hundreds of instances revealing his grasp of details in all things may be cited one: Following reports of many disorders, he sent an officer to Belgium to investigate the military situation there. The officer returned and reported. Napoleon quickly handed him back the report, with the words: "It is short two cannon in Ostend," which it really was.

In 1812, he issued, while at Moscow, the regulations for *Le Théâtre Français*, which, in all essential particulars, govern today, with rules as to the duties and parts of actors, the division of rôles, under what conditions entrances shall be made, how receipts shall be divided, and how profits shall be ordered. Only recently has this imperial authority, represented by a commission, been substituted by state authority, represented by an administrator.

He had postponed signing the decree. Yet he sat there in Moscow,

threatened by winter and the Russians, soon to be encompassed by flames him, the burning city, and had the imperturbability and the appreciation about artistic sign under such circumstances, a decree for the regulation of theatres.

serving
with

VIII

His character was not of as high an order as his genius. The love of self which went with his genius, the greed for power, which was his underlying weakness, led him at times into wrong, into unwise steps.

Three periods can be recognized in his history. In the first, his own interests and those of France fall together. The expedition to Egypt, which resulted in the loss of the fleet, was undertaken chiefly for his own interest, even though France could not well spare the fleet; but it was directed against England, and therefore justified. As the young general, and in the beginning of the consulate, he was a shining figure — the hope of France. The second period is that in which his own interest and those of France do not always harmonize.

The unfortunate expedition to Russia did not spring from Napoleon's weakness for power, but from the faithlessness of Alexander I, who always entertained a curious doubt as to Napoleon's attitude toward him, and his ingrained prejudice against a "usurper," of whose friendship he had recently been so proud. The interests of his dynasty, and the welfare of the French people — two highly different things, which, of course, sometimes were united — became one and the same thing in Napoleon's campaigns from 1808 to 1813. Then comes the last period, in which his

interests and those of France are again one, the years 1814 and 1815, when he is simply the over-general of France.

It is when he enjoyed complete power and unfailing good fortune that the unattractive sides of his nature are revealed, the purely despotic, the desire to suppress, and the opposition to liberty.

He becomes transformed when he changes from the conqueror to the defender, from the sacrificer to the sacrificed. And in this latest period, as indeed from the beginning, he was the chieftain of his people, more particularly so at this time.

The election of 1799, for instance, was in reality not a free expression of the people, but the voice of the army. In 1814, on his return from Elba, when he again appears, defeated, exiled, empty-handed, he becomes the real idol of the people. It cannot be truthfully said that only his situation had changed; essentially he was the same. Napoleon is no exception to the rule that one's nature changes with his circumstances.

IX

Bonaparte cut a sorry figure the 18th Brumaire. His brother Lucien redeemed the situation. A *coup d'état* is not brought about without intrigue, deceit and violence. Yet I consider (Victor Hugo and many others to the contrary notwithstanding) that this *coup* was not in itself an outrage; the contemptible parliament of the time deserved nothing better than to be destroyed by the military, even if it had a legal standing.

Bonaparte on the 18th Brumaire could have had no other plan than that of seizing power in France, even if, as a young general in Italy, — and even more so while at St. Jean d'Acre, — he had dreamed of establishing an empire in the Orient. However, Bernard Shaw's presentation of him in "The Man of Destiny," — in which he permits himself to be bullied by his lieutenant, have his nose tweaked by an Irish woman spy, and have his dreams of world conquest thus dissipated, — is nothing but silly caricature, in which every line is false.

Bonaparte had attained to power and it intoxicated him. He who had grown up silent and moody, foreign and disliked by his French associates, revealed a personality, an overwhelming brilliancy such as had scarcely been shown in another in like degree since ancient times. Men marvelled at him, loved him, worshipped him. His name eclipsed all other names.

It began with the army. Here was reflected that brilliancy which radiates from one who always sees correctly, acts correctly, and therefore conquers — not by chance, but by sheer force of genius.

One evening, after a great victory, his subordinate officers and members of his guard affectionately gave him, their chieftain, the designation of a subordinate, applying to him the familiar title of "The Little Corporal." He was small of stature. The title expressed a tender devotion. Yes, men were ready to die for him. Even ten years later soldiers when mortally

wounded would withstand the coming of death long enough to cry, "Long live the Emperor!" Thus in the beginning of the Russian campaign the Polish cavalry, instead of seeking a fording place, rode into the river Wilya at Wilna for him to be swept away, and with their drowning cries saluted him.

Alexander Kielland's little sketch, *Keyserens Kurer*, has reflected in masterly manner this devotion, while his bulky volume on Napoleon is worthless.

This astounding brilliancy soon captivated the French people. He was loved for his success and for his genius. He himself believed in his star and could not do otherwise. Yet he retained the admiration and loyalty of millions after this star had at length begun to sink.

X

The Greco-Roman period of antiquity was the ideal to which the men and women of the French revolution looked up. Bonaparte's officers took as their patterns the Spartans, as presented in classic tragedies, or the Romans, as they knew them from Corneille's *Horace*, or from Louis David's republican paintings in antique studies.

As the spiritual child of the revolution, he had himself the point of view of the revolutionary leader. The glass through which he saw the world from the beginning was that of the revolution. They sought to restore the manners and customs of ancient Rome; addressed one another as "Thou" and "Citizen," became heathens like the Romans, and permitted their women to dress as did the women of Rome. Madame Roland and Charlotte Corday had the make-up of Roman women, or tried to feel that they had.

Differing from them in that he sprang from real Italian stock, Napoleon yet takes a like course, assumes the title of "First Consul," an old Roman title; then that of *Imperator*, another old Roman title. His emblems are eagles, like the Roman. As did the Romans also, he permits the conquered peoples to retain their religions in peace. Furthermore, he plans for a restoration of the old Roman empire. This had been succeeded by the papal power on the one hand and the empire of Charlemagne on the other. Bonaparte takes over the papal authority in seizing Pius VII as captive. He becomes emperor in 1804, and barely two years thereafter (1806) the Holy Roman Empire of a thousand years (founded 843) may be said to have come to an end.

It seems almost childish to say that Napoleon during the hundred days was changed, became, in fact, a constitutionalist. Nevertheless, he permitted Benjamin Constant to draw up a constitution, and in 1815 abdicated the throne when the chambers requested him to do so, although a single battalion would have sufficed to scatter them. He was loyal to the constitution, when Louis XVIII, weak and vacillating as he was, dissolved

the chambers soon after his accession; what is more, locked the doors, and met with no opposition.

At Waterloo Napoleon ventured his last battle. Would it have availed had he triumphed there? The future seemed to hold little of promise. His son was not even possessed of vitality. But the terrible reaction of fifteen years which swept over Europe would have been escaped if he had won. This scarcely admits of doubt.

XI

Of the purely personal side of Napoleon it is difficult to learn the truth. The sources of the time are obscured. Among sources often referred to, for instance, are the writings of two women, both of whom were once ardently attached to him, but later were bitterly hostile to him — Madame de Staël and Madame de Remusat.

Early in their relations Madame de Staël once came to Lucien Bonaparte, almost in tears, and said: "When I stand in the presence of your brother I am overcome in my desire to gain his esteem. I seek for words, weigh and turn them in order to get him to interest himself in me." She was turned away and transformed into a terribly revengeful foe.

Madame de Remusat's original memoirs were written while she was strongly under the spell of Bonaparte, but were subsequently burned. Such as we now have were written many years afterward when her sentiments had changed. Also there are Metternich's frivolous memoirs, in which Napoleon is revealed after the manner of street gossip. "He said so and so," citing some silly expression — "but to this I replied," etc., and he (Napoleon) was soon silenced.

A certain ignorance and stupidity is revealed in Napoleon in the manner in which Metternich pressed him to the wall with his crushing answers — twenty years afterwards.

Napoleon was not lacking in simple human virtues. In school he was an industrious pupil, in the army a conscientious officer. Throughout all his life he was a good son and a good, if stern, brother.

He was inclined towards scrupulous economy, and for this reason frequently lost his temper when anyone sought to defraud him in sale or delivery. Because of this he also inspected Josephine's accounts and demanded that she should not be so extravagant as she was, that she should not contract debts, and that she should not permit accounts to be sent her in which charges double the worth of things appeared.

Under the directory the men of most influence were those who had made millions through furnishing the troops with obsolete weapons and damaged supplies. They became the great financiers of the time to whom the directory looked for loans to the state. Napoleon soon gave his attention to the strongest of these — Ouvrard, and had his wealth confiscated for fraud.

He was invariably high-minded. As emperor he stood by his old opponent Carnot, and in the noblest manner, because he recognized in him that remarkable talent, which, in spite of personal weaknesses, is the glory of Frenchmen. Again and again he pardoned breaches of his confidence, and small and large betrayals.

Most astonishing was his forbearance toward Josephine — that faithless, but elegant, Creole, that goose from a tropic isle, who not only defrauded him as wife, but betrayed him and in her corruption was on the point of dishonoring him. She had never loved him; her marriage with him was a matter of business. Before the marriage she wrote to a woman friend: "I feel lukewarm toward this matter, with such poor prospects in view."

Bonaparte was greatly loved. It has been said that he married in order to obtain the Italian command through Josephine's earlier influence with Barras. It is true Josephine secured the command for him, but in her letters is revealed how much greater was his ambition and faith in himself than the estimates of his doubting comrades in arms. "It will be," he said, "a great piece of good fortune to the people if once I tender them my services."

Josephine wavered between her lukewarm feelings and the brilliant prospects in which Napoleon believed. "Sometimes his unshakable faith affects me so," she said, "that I am led to believe everything possible which this wonderful person would have me believe." She had not yet sensed a hint of his genius.

The first use to which she put his victories was to permit herself to be bribed by army contractors until she discovered to her astonishment and terror that neither fraud nor theft was to be permitted. Nevertheless she accepted without stint pearl necklaces, diamonds, paintings, and antiques, and with convenient deceptions declared they were presents. The wedding occurred in 1796.

Already, in 1797, she had given her preference to one M. Charles, a short, thick-set fellow. While Napoleon was in Egypt she permitted this Charles to establish a foothold at Malmaison, where he conducted himself as the master of the house.

She became greatly alarmed at Bonaparte's return; she had believed he would fall in Egypt. She drove forth to meet him, but took a wrong road so that he arrived in Paris forty-eight hours before she did. He refused to see her, but after she had remained outside of his closed door day and night, he permitted himself to be moved by her tears and entreaties, and thereafter said never a word of what had occurred.

In the same manner may be noted his relations toward Bernadotte whose treacherous nature he knew. Writing from Schonbrunn, Sept. 11, 1809, he said: "It is my purpose no longer to permit the command to rest in the hands of the Duke of Pontecorvo. He is exchanging letters

with the plotters in Paris and is a man on whom I cannot rely." And again, on Sept. 15, 1810 — "To the Duke of Mollien — Give the Duke of Pontecorvo a million from the treasury. It shall later be settled." After he had discussed the case with the finance minister, Napoleon took this sum from the civil list. Bernadotte held this money until after the Swedish Riksdag's election in order to cut a figure as the Crown Prince of Sweden. It would probably be difficult to imagine a wilder farce than that by which Bernadotte, discovered and advanced by another adventurer named Mörner, by virtue of the untruth that he was loved and supported by Napoleon, finally becomes King of Sweden.

Few men have been so basely betrayed as was Napoleon. Perhaps Cæsar is a parallel.

Bernadotte not only betrayed him, but sought to influence his comrades in command to desert him. After his attempt at suicide at Fontainebleau, Napoleon said to the Count of Vicenza: "It is not the loss of the throne that makes me unhappy. But do you know, Coulaingcourt, anything worse to bear than the betrayal of your confidence? The depravity and ingratitude of people — how I have suffered from these in the last twenty days passes expression."

General Solignac had stolen six million francs from the war treasury. Napoleon removed him, permitted him to restore the sum and treated him leniently. In 1815, he was one of the first in the chamber of deputies to demand Napoleon's abdication.

Among his generals Massena was most dishonorable. Avariciousness was his vice. Once it became necessary for Napoleon to compel him to return three million francs. Yet he appointed him Duke of Rivoli and Count of Essling.

He did not do this through a need of his generals. He pursued the same course toward his subordinate officers. Once an adjutant of the viceroy of Italy had lost all the emperor's dispatches while on a trip. Napoleon wrote to his stepson: "Your adjutant has lost my dispatches. Place him under arrest a couple of days. An adjutant might in his distress lose his trousers on the road, but not his sword nor his dispatches."

Bourrienne had been his fellow pupil at school in Brienne, his private secretary during the campaigns in Italy and Egypt, and while he was first consul. He sold himself to the highest bidder, and informed Fouché of every step Bonaparte planned, for a fixed price of 25,000 francs per month. Napoleon had a suspicion of this. Not until the Coulon firm, contractors for the cavalry, had defrauded to the extent of three million francs, and it was discovered that Bourrienne was in league with the firm, did he receive his dismissal without punishment. In 1804, Napoleon again received him into his service, and made him minister to Hamburg in 1805. Here he diverted to himself an illegal income of seven or eight million francs, and began to betray Napoleon in negotiations with the bourbons

at London. A few days after the emperor's fall Bourrienne wrote to Talleyrand. "Even when I was associated with the Emperor, I wished always that this remarkable prince (Louis XVIII) and his noble house might return to France." This wish he had not made known to Napoleon.

The entire world deserted him, and finally Marmont, who had heroically fought for him to the last, opened the gates of Paris in 1814 for the allied armies opposing Napoleon. In 1815, Napoleon struck his name from the roll of the army.

When word was received at St. Helena that the emperor had been betrayed by his generals, Napoleon protested that the word was too strong. "Not betrayed," said he. "Fouché was always trying to show me letters, in which he declared the writers were speaking ill of me. I answered that I did not care to see the letters. When they are written to their wives and sweethearts they are tempted to say bad things of me, that I am a tyrant, etc., but this they must have permission to do; they must have an outlet. They think well of me for all that." This is one form in which greatness reveals itself.

XII

In dealing with women, Napoleon lacked good breeding, fine courtesy and charm. It is not true, however, that in his dealings with them he was uniformly rude and unchivalrous. His rough bulletins against Queen Louise of Prussia were politics, if, indeed, poor politics. He was chivalrous toward Queen Louise of Sachsen-Weimar, although little Weimar had denounced and repudiated him.

While in Warsaw, in 1807, he became smitten with the pure young Countess Walewska, born Laczinska, who was consumed with admiration for him, but would not give herself wholly to him. Thereupon the Polish nobility, with great display, in order to impress her, and in a document signed with all the first names in Poland, called to her consideration the fact that from small causes great political results often flow. "Think you," it read, "that Esther gave herself to Ahasverus out of love? The swoon into which she fell on seeing him is best proof that sensitiveness had no part in that contingency. She offered herself to save her people and won the honor of having saved them. If but we could say the same, to your glory and our good fortune!"

Napoleon won her with his pledge to do everything possible to rehabilitate her country. He had great sins upon his conscience over the Polish people, having misused and failed them. He wished greatly to please Marie Walewska, if it could be made to accord with his politics. Yet he was constantly repeating at the time that he did not wish to be the Don Quixote of Poland. In spite of this fact, we see in 1809, when he wished to have the czar give him his young sister Anna Pavlovna as wife, in order that the alliance with Russia might be strengthened, he

not only promised that he would never seek to extend the duchy of Warsaw, but that he would never mention the name of Poland again. When the breach in his alliance with Alexander occurred he turned again, in 1812, to the confiding Poles.

In this respect Alexander's relations with the Poles has a noteworthy parallel. He also became attached to a beautiful Polish woman, Marie Antonovna Nariszkin, born duchess of Czetwertynska, who always offered up prayer to him to reëstablish Poland. For a long time he held out against her entreaties, even could not bear to see her name. Suddenly at the outbreak of the war of 1812, Alexander issued a proclamation in which he, like the Russian over-general in 1914, and with the same falsity, promised the Poles rehabilitation of their ancient power under Russian sovereignty.

Napoleon's relations with Marie Walewska were, and always remained, a source of sorrow to him. Her marriage, in 1816, with one of his officers, General (Count) d'Ornano, grieved him when he learned of it at St. Helena. She died a year later.

XIII

The power of the spell exercised by Napoleon is best shown in his journey through France, after his return from Elba. He fled from Elba because he had learned that his removal to some distant, isolated island was contemplated. The name of St. Helena had already been mentioned.

Success attended his venture. He evaded the English ships, but met with disappointment soon after landing. He met with a spirit of hostility which made it necessary for him to resort on foot to the lonely road over the Alps. The first difficulty encountered was that of winning over the first troops he met, and who seemed bent upon shooting him. However, the courage, audacity and geniality he displayed won them, and likewise the next body, and the next.

Marshal Ney was pledged to make an end of Napoleon. He had expressed himself with great brutality against the Emperor at Fontainebleau, and was bound by his promise to Louis XVIII to bring Napoleon back in an iron cage. Nevertheless, he forgot his oath, so entranced did he become at Napoleon's proclamation that his eagles would soon be flying from steeple to steeple, until they arrived at the towers of Notre Dame. "So shall it be written," he said, and his spirit of opposition was dissipated.

He had only 6,000 men, as against Napoleon's 14,000, and his men were in mind devoted to the Emperor, simply waiting for the signal to cry, "Vive l'Empereur!" "I cannot hold back the sea with my hands," were his words. When the news was received that Ney had also gone over at Besançon, ardent young Bonapartists at Paris posted up placards at the gates of Vendôme reading: "Dear Brother Louis: You need not send any more troops. I have enough now. — Napoleon."

XIV

He had said: "On the 20th of March I will be in Paris." He attained his goal. At seven o'clock in the morning of that day a great throng of people streamed toward the Tuileries, eager for news, at the report that the King had fled the evening before. A tri-colored cockade borne by an officer met with a bitter reception from a group of the King's supporters, so great already was the change in sentiment.

At ten o'clock a great throng of people streamed into the palace grounds crying: "Long live the Emperor!" "Down with the Priests!" They were the workmen on the fortifications. They shook the gates of the castle and sought to tear them off but were dispersed. Not long afterwards was heard the sound of arms, of trampling of horses, near the stone bridge, and the rumbling of caissons. Sabres and bayonets gleamed in the sunshine. They were the imperial officers whom Louis had retained at half pay, whom General Excelmans was leading from St. Denis into Paris, with a squadron of cuirassiers and some artillery. Huzzahs and shouts and the blare of trumpets and pipes were heard along their way, and Excelmans entered the Tuileries; but permitted the members of the national guard to retain their places. During the remainder of the day were seen at the various entrances to the palace an officer with a tri-colored cockade side by side with a grenadier of the national guard with the white cockade and lilies.

At two o'clock the tri-colors were hoisted on the Tuileries, the municipal chamber and the Vendome. Groups of laborers went singing through the streets. The citizens were puzzled and apprehensive. They feared or suspected a new invasion of European armies, and lamented the good King Louis, "such a brave and righteous man." Even at that hour the former members of the imperial palace's household had taken possession of the Tuileries. The crowd standing outside saw persons slipping one by one through the palace gates. The first of them in fear, as if stealing in. They were the former counselors of state, ministers, masters of chambers, directors of ceremonies, all in gala uniform, and also butlers, cooks, chamber servants in their liveries of other days.

Then there were the ladies in waiting, wives of the high officials, of generals, of financiers, and chiefs of industry, with diamond necklaces under their furs and robes of ermine, and their court gowns adorned with the imperial violets. They found one another again and felicitated one another. With child-like joy they ran through the salons, royal chambers and galleries, all the rooms they remembered so well, and where their brilliant former prospects were blasted. In the throne hall they noticed that the lilies on the carpet were simply sewed fast upon it. One of them pulled off a lily and found beneath it the imperial bee. Thereupon the women in all their finery went down upon their knees and set themselves

eagerly to work. In less than half an hour's time they had transformed the carpet to its old imperial form. They looked up and saw the imperial dukes of Bassano, Gaeta, and Rovigo, — they saw Count Lavalette, Marshal Lefebvre, Generals Davout and Excelmans, Queen Hortense of Holland, Queen Julie, consort of King Joseph. Even the doorkeepers of the old days stood at their old posts. It was as if they had slept and wakened from an evil dream.

Time sped by. Fog and darkness spread over Paris, and the last idly curious ones in the grounds could see the windows in the palace lighted up. The Emperor was momentarily expected. Expectancy was giving away to anxiety. What if a bullet from some fanatical foe or some hired enemy had laid him low!

Finally at nine o'clock a distant sound of horses and wagons was heard with cries along the Seine. The tumult drew nearer, increased in volume, became unprecedented. A postchaise swung in at a sharp trot at the palace gates, and a train of a thousand troopers of all grades of arms riding in disorder, swung their sabres and cried in a voice of thunder, "Long Live the Emperor!"

The palace grounds were soon thronged with former officers. Generals standing on the outer steps drew their swords and hurried down. The throng became so dense that the horses drew back and the postilions stopped ten steps from the conservatory entrance.

The door of the carriage was thrown open. Napoleon was pulled out of the carriage and borne from arm to arm into the hallway where other arms elevated him in the air. In this manner he was borne up the stairs. A sort of delirium seized upon his adherents. They caressed him, seized his hands and his body.

The throng bearing him soon came in contact with the other which came storming down from the story above to greet him. The two groups threatened to crush one another to death, and there were fears that the emperor would be suffocated.

Coulaincourt shouted to Lavalette, "Hold yourself, for God's sake, before him!" Lavalette stopped, turned about and braced himself against the crowd, ascending backwards up the steps, steadily one step after another before the Emperor and announcing, "It is he! It is he!"

But the Emperor seemed not to see or hear anything. He permitted himself to be carried, with his arms before him, with closed eyes and a firm smile upon his lips, as if falling asleep. Then consciousness returned to him; he knew and caressed all. Following this he went into his cabinet and locked the door behind himself. At once he sat down to a writing table and began his work of founding a new government. Gradually the tumult ceased. It became quiet. The troopers tied their horses at the gates and laid themselves down upon the ground in their coats; the palace yard resembled a bivouac in a captured city.

XV

As a rule it may be said that those who wrote of the first Napoleon fifty years ago, during the reign of Napoleon the Third (Lonfrey, Jung), were influenced by their hate of the later emperor, and sought thereby to discredit the work of the man who had brought ruin to France. While Taine has written about him without bitterness, yet with coldness, and Albert Vandal with discrimination, yet with sympathy, only few who have dealt with the subject up to the close of the last century (such as Henry Houssaye or Frederick Masson) have caught the enthusiasm which Napoleon in his great days inspired. In the meanwhile he has been the object of the ill will of the republicans. Clemenceau has always detested him. In the government schools he has been presented by teacher and text-book alike as a harmful personality, the curse of France. This can scarcely be wondered at since Napoleon seemed to hark back to an earlier period. To him military power was the highest good; to the French republicans this has always been of lesser worth. Many believed that the period of wars was past and that peace among the nations of Europe was a necessary condition to progress. Even the feeling of revenge was forgotten. Only in recent years has the hope of a decisive war been revived.

For Napoleon, as for earlier monarchs, and for the revolutionists, the centralization of all the power in the state was necessary. In the newer France democracy has been the way to political advancement. It was Napoleon, who with a view to getting the church in his power, concluded the concordat with the Pope, which in the end proved more advantageous to the Catholic church than to the French government, and which the state has only recently put to an end. But he was, it should be remembered, the chosen chieftain of his people, and could not have done as he did had he not had the people with him.

The more moderate republicans believed for a long time that they had laid bare the inward truth about him in the following superficial analysis: His advent and his rise was a great piece of good fortune to Europe, to whom he brought the ideas of the revolution, and whom he liberated from the outgrown forms of the feudal age. However, he was a great harm to France, which he exhausted, and which he deprived of all local and provincial independence. A portion of the younger generation, particularly among the ardent nationalists — with Maurice Barres as leader — are convinced that Napoleon was of real value to France, considering the word value in its higher sense. To them he appears as the most astounding example of energy the world has so far known.

To this others of the younger school may reply: "He had his share and blame for the untimely death of one and a half million Frenchmen and for the miseries the wars brought to France and Europe." Yet he did not cripple France, and never humiliated it as in later years we have seen it

humiliated, in the Panama and Dreyfus cases. He radiated an enthusiasm, a heroic outlook which before the revolution had been unknown. He also inspired in France a personal deification, a delusion which brought upon it severe and bloody penalties. Yet his countrymen do not look back upon his reign with shame. There was nothing low or scandalous, or small about it. In spite of all faults it remains a bright era.

A much greater guilt than that of having played with human life in the attaining of great ends is that which dulls and represses a people so that it no longer aims at great ends. At that time the people of France looked up to their leading men; since that time they have too often been obliged to look down upon them and have had to cast about for someone or something of which to be proud.

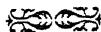
It is a commentary on prevailing conditions that at the close of the last century it was revival of interest in Napoleon which came as a plank to a sinking national pride. Since that time the republican spirit has gained much in ground and strength until now the military ideal, due to unfortunate political conditions, has again pushed the peaceful one to the rear.

Under the stress of the terrible World War, it became a matter of serious thought what a Napoleon was worth or would yet be worth, and the mind again dwelt with greater interest upon the great luminary of the past. It is not yet burned out.

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

1799-1850

By LÉON GOZLAN ¹ (1806-1866)



I

It is rarely that men of distinction, arrived at a serious age, do not concern themselves, even unconsciously, with the picture which the world will paint of them when they exist only in name. The truth of this becomes apparent when one considers the care with which Montaigne, Rousseau, Voltaire, and a thousand others, groomed their shadows; Montaigne in those marvelous Essays, Rousseau in his scandalous Confessions, Voltaire in his admirable Correspondence. They become obsequious courtiers, frank and imperturbable lovers of posterity. One might accuse these anxious sovereigns of sending their portraits to the Majesties of the Future, in order to learn, or rather to conjecture — for they never will really learn — how they will be received by them.

Balzac, or de Balzac — the 'de', I believe, means nothing — avoided this almost universal practice. He did not give himself for a moment to the thought that anyone would ever care to know, in addition to his books, his opinions, his character, the familiar details of his habits, of his participation, more or less great, in the monotony of everyday existence.

If it occurred to him, under the Oriental influence of coffee, as he sat between his best friend, Laurent Jan, and myself, to speak of the establishment which he hoped to set up when he retired, he construed it in proportions so colossal, so splendid, that Solomon himself would have retreated with all the haste that sandals permit, before the enormous expenditure involved. But later in the evening, when we had left the comforts of Versailles, and were re-entering Paris, these abstractions would suffer somewhat from the jolting of the coach and the difficulties of traffic, with the result that we would not care especially whether his establishment — this Pantheon of the future — was to be of bronze, of granite, of jasper, or of marble. It was not, however, that this vast sea — for Balzac was a sea — had no limits; it was only that he placed them so far off. He extended them so adventurously, at the suggestion of his terrible fancy, that infinity and nothingness impinged upon him. Often,

¹ Translated especially for this collection (first time in English) out of the original French, by Babette and Glenn Hughes.

Balzac en pantoufles (as the original title reads) was published at Paris in 1856.

after these projects — his dreams — he seemed to himself to be growing mad, and those who listened to him, completely so. In short, and to be exact, he was a living encyclopædia — as preposterous and as excellent. He refused to consider anything by itself; for him each thing was related to another, this other, to still a thousand others. The atom, in his hands, became a world; the world, in its turn, became a universe. All that he wrote: articles, books, stories, dramas, comedies, was only the preface to what he intended to write; what he intended to write was only the preparation for further work, similarly generative. One could also say of his life what he said of each of his works: that it was only the preface to his life. He fell asleep on the steps before the entrance.

There was a short time, twelve or fifteen years ago, when the newspapers were much occupied with Balzac; but they treated him as they treat everyone, that is, hastily, and without reflection. They spoke only of his hair, his luggage, and his walking-stick. He was the lion of a fortnight — or let us say a year — and then was left in a magnified and grossly exaggerated condition. It must be admitted that it is the caricature of this extraordinary man which remains in the mind of the present generation. The fault, however, does not rest entirely upon the journalists. After filling the world with the noise of his triumphs — a world eager to see and touch the god whose miracles it had acknowledged — Balzac, who until then had lived in the secret places of meditation, suddenly put on *l'habit d'Humann*, donned a white waistcoat, raised the pillory of his cravat, caught up a gold walking-stick, and ventured into the full light of the Opéra, there to strut amid the splendour of a stage-box, at the side of M. Veron. We see him repeating this gesture again and again throughout the winter: delighting in the show within the show. What sort of impression could these sensational appearances convey, except that of the slightly ridiculous?

Balzac was a lion, as the Dey of Algiers was a lion, or Don Pedro, or many other lesser personages. This was too much for one who up to that time had received so little. In condescending to show himself thus he misjudged not so much his own time as the future. He dazzled, he astonished, but he dazzled too completely — he could not be seen. He produced the effect of sunlight on ice. As a consequence he was seen but little — he was poorly seen; he was disfigured. The public will recover from this dazzlement; indeed it has already recovered; but it will be some time yet before it arrives at the point of calm and sober judgment, where the bubble of vanity is transformed to an aureole about the head of genius. After this violent explosion, Balzac was subdued, not into a calm, for he never knew that condition, but into a state of comparative isolation. He hung up his coat, threw his white cravat into a corner, and hid that ridiculous walking-stick of Alcibiades. The newspapers can say, in their defense, that they knew Balzac badly, that at first glance they placed him

on a grotesque pedestal. The fact of the matter is that Balzac made no effort to disclose himself, to let himself be studied from a favorable angle. He seldom went to plays; he was probably not seen three times in his life in the foyer of the Comédie-Française. I had the greatest difficulty keeping him in his seat at the first production of *Les Burgraves*. Every minute he was asking, like a fretful child, "Is it finished? When will this be over?" Yet he admired Victor Hugo tremendously. What he disliked was giving his attention long to any sort of spectacle.

We come back, then, to this: from the standpoint of his private life, Balzac is not understood. The reason is, as we have already said, that he did not care to groom his shadow.

If he did not appear frequently in the theatre, he did not appear much more frequently in society, which he only consented to penetrate a little after the success of one of his novels, when he was sure of justifying the enthusiastic attention that he so often inspired. In twenty years, therefore, it will be almost impossible to know the intimate peculiarities of Balzac, if one must depend upon the contemporary indiscretions of the newspapers, or on the revelations of men of the world, who, after all, write little. The world has held such varied and contradictory opinions of him, particularly during the two principal epochs of his literary life, that it will be of some value to future historians of this remarkable writer, to explain here the difference between these opinions, and the reasons for their existence.

The great, the immense success of Balzac came to him through women: they worshipped in him a man who knew how, by ingenuity rather than by truth, to prolong for them the age of love — and chiefly the age of being loved. This gallantry, in forty or fifty octavo volumes, has exalted them with the fanaticism of a new religion. Balzac has created for them an imaginary country, a Palestine of the mind, an evangel of love. It is a religion of love, no less, which he has founded. And, without question, it will endure.

To this first and tremendous element of success, he added another, which completed his theory of chivalry. Not only did he render these worthy woman capable of being loved at an age when normally they would scarcely even remember having been loved; he also adopted the heroic expedient of presenting them always as victims — the victims of their characteristic infidelity!

He attempts, at the outset, to avoid a dangerous paradox: for few of the women in his charming and immortal creations are ever reproached. He excuses them; he goes farther, and lauds their faults to a point where one must doubt, if Balzac is to be believed, whether virtue and constancy would not render them less worthy of respect. Such concessions are not necessary to make us admire a generation which has only virtues with which to reproach itself.

This adoration marked Balzac's first step along the road to great renown. But alas! the spirit of adoration grew weak in the souls of many of his converts, for there came a day when he entered a world of more tangible passions; when he saw, and trembled before, the wickedness and audacity in the fawn-like eyes of Vautrin, when he looked upon the dark miseries that dwell in the corners of society, where fans are drawn before faces aflame with rouge. He, an elemental god, betrayed his own religion, and his followers came to hate him. The great ladies of the aristocracy looked askance at him; the *bourgeoises*, less courteous, frankly turned their backs.

This revolution, it must be admitted, did not much affect him. At the time he thought seriously of writing for the theatre, for having got one foot into reality, he was eager to get the other there. But such obstacles confronted him!

II

As we have said, the opinion of society scarcely affected him. After one broadside from the newspapers he returned to *Les Jardies*, bringing with him provisions for gaiety and philosophy, which he threw on the table—that table around which we so often awaited dinner for him until nine o'clock, but where we also frequently dined without waiting for him. The two homes in which he left the most vivid souvenirs of his habits are the little house at Passy, in the Rue Basse, and *Les Jardies*, the tiny, run-down estate which he bought in Ville-d'Avray. Just when he bought it I am not sure, but it cost him dearly, and he was always paying for it. No Indian or Chinese poem contains enough lines to equal the boresomeness of Balzac's life at *Les Jardies*. One can say that although for years he lived there, thought and worked there, he never actually inhabited the place. He was put up there rather than accommodated. Was this a real home—this cottage with green shutters, which never knew even the shadow of a chest of drawers, or the semblance of a curtain? The real habitation at *Les Jardies* was the one located in the same orchard enclosure, twenty or thirty paces from his own—an almost possible house, where, in heaven knows what fit of prudence, he had stored his beautiful furniture from the Rue des Batailles, together with his valuable library. This building, so utterly devoid of architectural value, was at the time occupied by Madame V—— and her family. The famous dwelling at *Les Jardies* was built by Balzac directly facing this insignificant house. Although the grounds of the place are rich in rusticity, they offer so many inconveniences that one is bound to wonder at Balzac's choice of location. The land does not slope, it tumbles along the way from Sèvres to Ville d'Avray.

It would be difficult, I believe, for a tree of any size to take root in such slanting ground. The scene-painters of the theatre might find it

decidedly original, but it is terrifically antipathetical to the pleasure of walking. Landscape-gardeners, under the fantastic direction of Balzac, devoted the whole of several months to maintaining, by force of art and small rocks, these successive plateaus, which were always so ready to slip gaily down, one over the other, at the slightest rain. I have seen them working continually to repair these hanging gardens, as though they had been those of Semiramis. It drove them to despair.

I shall remember for a long time the astonishment which came over Frédéric Lemaitre the day he arrived at *Les Jardies* to discuss with Balzac the matter of putting Vautrin into rehearsal. In order to rest his feet, which had given out under him, he anchored them with two stones, exactly as one would support a piece of furniture on an uneven floor. When he resumed his walk, he threw away the rocks, or else carried them in his hands to use in a similar manner farther on. The maneuver was very diverting to watch. Balzac alone retained his customary composure in the midst of this perpetual slipping. He possessed to an extraordinary degree that rare ability to seem to be taking no part in what went on around him. He could disconcert a thunder-clap. One can easily guess that land so difficult to fertilize would not offer shade to the pedestrian. It offered, in fact, not so much as a shadow. Perhaps, since that rather remote time, it has improved in substance and in vegetation; but then, good God! I can only compare it with the rocky peak of Teneriffe.

Yet we may as well admit that a single tree, an acrobatic tree, a fairly well-grown walnut tree, had actually taken root on this perilous slope. On the plateau of some size it had taken up its position of isolated dominance. If we mention this rather tardily it is because it had not always belonged to Balzac. The community of Sèvres, by a strange distribution of land, separated it (to Balzac's profit) from the rest of *Les Jardies*. It is always amusing to relate the history of this walnut tree; or perhaps we should say, the comedy. However, comedy or history, we shall return to it.

Some lines from the *Memoirs* of Saint-Simon decided Balzac, who was searching for a rural location, in favor of *Les Jardies*. When Louis XIV lived at Versailles, his courtiers vied with each other in the building of country houses around Saint-Cloud, Meudon, Luciennes, Sèvres, Ville d'Avray, and a thousand other communities adjacent to Versailles. It was then that *Les Jardies* emerged from the yellow, perpendicular mud; only to vanish when the monarchy came upon bad days. It was Balzac's wish to recover a bit of this past. He may, however, have been the victim of his imagination, at least in the matter of topography, for had this place actually been *Les Jardies*? I have heard doubts expressed on the subject. Sèvres and Ville d'Avray have always denied Balzac's claim to *Les Jardies*; they have never called the place anything but *the vineyard of M. de Balzac*. At any rate, Balzac had scarcely got the outer walls up and the heavy,

green, swinging-gate hung, when he had engraved in gold letters on a plaque of black marble fixed under the bell: *Les Jardies*.

The gate was put in place and swung on its hinges some time before the house, whose entrance it guarded, arose. The construction of the house was for a long time a subject of mirth among satirical Parisians, who are always lying in wait to detect deficiencies in a distinguished man. Balzac had a great weakness for masonry. This weakness does not call for any apology, for the building instinct is a highly respectable one, but still it should be realized that at this period, it was Balzac's only pleasure, his only relief from the strain of too much mental activity. It has been reported that in directing personally, the construction of the lodge at *Les Jardies*, he forgot about the staircase. That he would allow no advice or comment, no suggestions from his architect or his masons, we must admit. But it is quite another matter to believe that he was so negligent as to overlook the need of a staircase in the house, and that one day the masons and the architect should have come to him and said, "M. de Balzac, the house is finished. When do you wish us to build a staircase?"

The matter does require an explanation. Balzac dreamed of spacious rooms and landings for *Les Jardies*, with plenty of light from all four directions; but in the building plans, the monstrous staircase devoured here the third of a room, there the half of another; it ruined the sketch made by the poetic crayon of the author. He attempted to curtail it, to distort it, to adjust it to the angles of the structure — but the building was too far along; there was not enough space left. The accursed staircase always came out wrong. The masons hurled their plaster at the ceiling; the architect broke the arms of his compass. In one of these moments of desperation, Balzac evidently said to himself, "Since the staircase wishes to be master of my house, I will throw the staircase out the door." That is just what he did. His rooms then spread as they pleased, with no limits except the four walls, whereas, the staircase, in punishment for its bothersome pretensions, was relegated to the exterior of the house. Balzac could have pointed out that in Holland and Belgium many houses are built in this naïve manner, carrying their staircases on their backs, like baskets; but he always scorned the idea of explaining himself on the subject.

Balzac survived, but can we say as much for the staircase? Has it stood through all the hot and cold nights of our lovely France? I do not know. It would be inexact, however, to say that the interior of the house at *Les Jardies* was entirely devoid of the inconvenient convenience of staircases. It had several of minor importance, leading directly enough to wherever one wished to go, and for these Balzac planned rosewood facing and upholstery of purple velours.

What he planned for *Les Jardies* was infinite. On the bare walls of each room he wrote in charcoal a description of the rich furnishings which he

intended to give it. Many years later, I read these inscriptions on the patient stucco surface:

*Here a facing of Paros marble;
Here a stylobate of cedar wood;
Here a ceiling painting by Eugène Delacroix;
Here an Aubusson tapestry;
Here a fireplace of cipolin marble;
Here some doors in the Trianon style;
Here a mosaic parquet made of rare island woods.*

These marvels never came nearer realization than the charcoal inscriptions. Balzac, however, did not mind joking about his ideal furnishings, and he laughed even more than I did when one day I wrote in very large letters on the wall of his own bare room: HERE A PICTURE BY RAPHAEL, PRICELESS, AND SUCH AS NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN.

The only thing not lacking at *Les Jardies* . . . But this is how the conversation went between Balzac and me regarding that harmonious fixture, invisible but real, with which he planned to surprise me:

"You have never noticed or admired the perfection which I have achieved in the furnishing of *Les Jardies*," he said. "It is so unusual and so ingenious that I can almost claim it as my own invention — though I should hesitate to refer to it as my masterpiece."

"No, my dear Balzac, I have not yet noticed this innovation, but if you will be good enough to . . ."

"Look about you; what do you see?"

"Exactly what I have seen for some time: walls entirely free from vulgar objects that might hinder the unobstructed view. To employ a more explicit phrase: I see nothing at all."

"Look more carefully."

"Still nothing."

"But you are unwilling to try."

"No, I assure you!"

"Well, then, that is the best compliment you could pay my invention — your inability to perceive its existence. Otherwise it would have been imperfect, a failure, and would have had to be done over."

"But what is it?"

"Is it not ridiculous and stupid," he continued, "that for centuries wires should have been strung the length of walls, and that at the end of these wires one should see an enormous bell, as silly as it is indiscreet? Notice now the bell I have invented for gentlemen who dislike being jarred by the clang of iron — for scholars, for reflective men. One does not see the bell at all. Look for it! It is hidden in the wall at a point where it will never even be noticed. Hereafter one will not see a man ring any more than one will see him think. M. Scribe has already adopted this sort of

bell, and is enchanted with it. Each room at *Les Jardies* is fitted with one. Come and see if I am joking."

I followed Balzac, and he showed me, with considerable pride, in each room a model of his invention. Both of us, he through admiration for the inventor, I with the subservience of a courtier, thereupon indulged ourselves in the primitive pleasure of bell-ringing.

Without having been there, one could hardly imagine his delight in sounding this carillon, which proclaimed his triumph, and brought echoes from all the empty spaces of the building. So, there were plenty of sounds at *Les Jardies*, but when one had started them, few servants answered.

III

It was in one of the lower rooms, on the ground-floor, that Balzac customarily dined, and it was here that he received us to dinner, which was served at six o'clock — at least for his friends. He himself arrived occasionally in time for dessert; often he did not appear at all. These irregular habits played havoc with his digestion. He drank only water; he ate little food, except fruit, of which he consumed a quantity. The fruit that he kept on the table was astonishingly beautiful and savory. His lips quivered, his eyes shone with pleasure, his hands trembled, at the sight of a heap of pears or luscious peaches. Not one would remain to tell of the annihilation of the others. He devoured them all. He was superb at this vegetarian Pantagruelism: his cravat removed, his shirt open, the fruit-knife in his hand; laughing, drinking water, cutting into the pulp of a dean's-pear, and — I should like to add, talking, but Balzac said little at table. He left off talking, laughed from time to time, softly, in the shy manner of a savage, or, if a remark pleased him, exploded like a bomb. He should have grown weary of this, but he never did. Finally, his chest expanded, and his shoulders danced under his merry chin. The staunch Tourangeau came to the surface. We fancied that we saw Rabelais at the Manse of the Abbey of Thélème. He was especially pleased by an outburst of puns, very silly, very stupid, inspired by the wine, which, incidentally, was delicious.

There was a good deal of drinking at table — too much sometimes. Without casting reflections upon anyone in particular, I may say that more than once I left several members of that exalted company in a position decidedly below the level of the napery.

I shall always remember a celebrated Russian who from midnight until two o'clock wept bitterly over the sad fate of one of his friends, who had been condemned to spend the remainder of his life at Tobolsk, in the depths of Siberia. These lamentations over his no doubt excellent friend affected us so profoundly that we all attempted to outdo each other in crying, though we had a very hazy notion as to what it was all about. He (the friend) worked in the mines, and the more we drank, the deeper

he descended into the bowels of the earth. By two o'clock he was plunged so far into bitumin, sulphur, mercury, and platinum, that we simply lost track of him. Some days afterwards, Balzac informed us that his villainous Russian had no friend at Tobolsk. He had admitted as much. We had been duped by Rhine wine and its various accomplices.

I have seen pass around this table celebrities of all sorts, the most brilliant and the most sombre: Malaga, Séraphita, and Vautrin. Among the intellectual phenomena in the procession at *Les Jardies*, was the unforgettable Madame de Bocarmé, a woman who knew everything, and spoke well on every subject. She delighted Balzac with her uncanny erudition. One evening she described for me the island of Java, where she had spent four years — she was a thousand and twenty-three years old, this marvellous creature, yet she seemed no more than thirty — she described Java, its monuments, its monsters, its splendors, and its frightful maladies, in such a learned way, with such vivacity of expression, in colors so clear and brilliant,³ that the evening was made unique and memorable for me.

After dinner we usually had coffee on the terrace: Balzac's coffee was proverbially excellent. I doubt, indeed, if Voltaire's was superior. Such color! Such an aroma! He made it himself, or at least supervised its making. It was a masterly concoction, subtle, divine — like his own genius.

¶ It was blended of three kinds of coffee-bean: bourbon, martinique, and mocha. The bourbon he bought on the Rue du Mont-Blanc (Chaussée-d'Antin); the martinique on the Rue des Vieilles-Audreiettes, from a grocer who surely ought never to forget his distinguished customer; the mocha in the suburb Saint-Germain, from a grocer on the Rue de l'Université. I do not know which he used the most of, though I accompanied him once or twice on coffee-buying expeditions. It amounted to not less than half a day's traveling about Paris, but good coffee is worth that, and more. For me Balzac's coffee was the finest and most exquisite thing in existence — excepting his tea, for I should always except that.

The tea, fine as the tobacco of Latakiah, yellow as Venetian gold, undoubtedly lived up to the eulogy with which Balzac perfumed it before he permitted you to taste it. Really, though, it was necessary to go through some kind of initiation ceremony before you could enjoy this gustatory privilege. Balzac never desecrated it, and we ourselves did not drink it every day. On great occasions only did he take it from the *kamtschadale* box, where it was kept like a holy relic, and unwrapped it slowly from its envelope of silk paper covered with hieroglyphics.

Then he would commence, always with fresh enjoyment, for him and for us, the history of this famous golden tea. The sun ripened it only for the Emperor of China, he said. Certain mandarins of the first class were allowed, as a privilege belonging to their high birth, to water it and guard it on the stalk. A chosen band of virgins cut it ere the rising of the sun, and carried it, chanting, to the feet of the Emperor. This divine tea was

produced in only one province of China, and that sacred province produced only a few pounds — enough for His Imperial Majesty and the eldest sons of the royal house. As a special dispensation, the Emperor of China, during a time of prosperity, sent a few rare handfuls of it by caravan to the Emperor of Russia, and it was from the latter's minister, *via* the ambassador, that Balzac obtained the supply with which he regaled us. The last parcel containing yellow-golden tea which Balzac received from M. Humboldt had been delayed *en route*. It was sprinkled with human blood. Some *Kirguises*, and some *Tartares Nogaïs* had attacked the Russian caravan on its return trip, and only after a bloody combat did the caravan reach Moscow. One might say, indeed, that this was tea of the Argonauts.

The history of the expedition we have abbreviated considerably. It went on much further. And besides, there was the account of the amazing properties of this tea — too amazing! If one drank three cups of this golden tea, declared Balzac, one lost the sight of an eye; six cups, and one became totally blind. This was worth thinking about. Once, when Laurent Jan wished to drink another cup of this tea worthy of a place in the most fantastic portions of the *Thousand and One Nights*, he said: "I'll risk an eye! Serve it!"

Rarely did Balzac spend the evening with his guests. He never did so when he was pressed by work. Immediately after dessert he said good-night and went to bed. Even in summer I have known him to leave us at seven o'clock of a beautiful evening, and climb pensively to his room, where he would force himself to sleep, that he might rise at midnight and work until morning.

Such was his life — the life of a convict — atrocious, contrary to nature, murderous! However, without a ruinous routine, I doubt if a writer can dig a very deep furrow in the side of that everlasting mountain, at the foot of which he finds his tomb.

Probably no one ever lived more at night than Balzac. The complete silence of life and nature gave him the composure necessary to the creation of his masterpieces. A great ship seeks the wide sea and the limitless depths. It was while traversing the lonely woods of Ville d'Avray and Versailles that he carried on his meditations. He confessed to me that many times he found himself in dressing-gown and slippers, bare-headed, in the Place du Carrousel, after having spent the night wandering through woods and villages, over roads and across meadows. He would then mount a Versailles coach and return to Ville d'Avray by way of Sèvres, only forgetting to pay the conductor, for the simple reason that he had left *Les Jardies* without a cent in his pocket. This annoying discovery never surprised anyone, for all the conductors knew him, and Balzac himself was used to going about without any money on him. Another habit of his was never to carry a watch.

IV

It was on one winter night that he was seized by the strangest notion of all. He left *Les Jardies* at midnight and proceeded, heaven knows how, to the Rue de Navarin, in Paris, to the house of his friend, Laurent Jan. It was around two o'clock in the morning when he knocked at the door. Laurent Jan, unprepared for such a visit, was sound asleep. Balzac knocked with might and main, awakened all the lodgers, and finally aroused the *concierge*, who was extremely indignant, as any *concierge* would be, at having his sweet dreams disturbed.

"What do you want? Who is there? Whom do you want? Who are you?" It was under this deluge of questions and maledictions that Balzac made his way to the quiet chamber of his friend. Very much alarmed by the apparition, Laurent Jan rubbed his eyes and sat up in bed:

"Is it really you, Prosper?"

"It is I," Balzac replied. "Get up; we are leaving."

"Leaving?"

"Yes, leaving. Get up and I will explain . . ."

"No; before I get up I want to know where you are expecting to take me."

"Well then, rejoice! We leave at once for the land of the Mogul."

"Are you mad?"

"We shall be immensely rich, as rich as an empire — the empire of the Mogul."

"Let's see now; before packing I should like to have explained a little more fully," objected Laurent Jan timidly, "just what we shall do in the land of the Mogul at this hour."

"Hurry!" cried Balzac. "We have lost more than a million while you were arguing about getting up. Time flies, and we have yet to find Gozlan . . ."

"Oh, Gozlan goes with us?"

"He goes with us. I want him to share in the unlimited treasure which awaits us."

Laurent Jan arose, and resigning himself to becoming a hundred or two hundred times a millionaire, dressed, shivering, and then said to Balzac, who was stamping with impatience:

"Just a moment. Since I have agreed to follow you to the land of the Mogul, just what are we going to do when we get there?"

"What are we going to do?"

"Yes; that is surely a sensible question."

Balzac took Laurent Jan by the arm and led him mysteriously to the lamp:

"See that ring?"

"Certainly, I see it; it is worth four cents."

"Hush! Look more closely."

"It is worth six. We'll say no more about it."

"I want you to know," continued Balzac, "that this ring was given me in Vienna by the famous historian, M. de Hammer, the last time I was in Germany."

"Well?"

"Well, then! M. de Hammer smiled as he gave it to me, and said, 'Some day you will learn the value of this little gift.' I carried the ring about with me, never thinking of his remark. I looked on it as nothing more or less than a common green stone . . ."

"Really?"

"Yes, really. Now, there are some Arabic characters engraved on this stone, and these characters . . . But I am anticipating the great surprise which came to me yesterday, and which I am so anxious to share with you, that we may both share the treasure . . . Yesterday, mind you, at the reception of the Ambassador to Naples, it occurred to me to have the Turkish Ambassador interpret these engraved characters for me. I showed him the ring. He had hardly glanced at it when he cried out so loudly that everyone was startled. 'You have a ring,' he exclaimed, bowing to the floor, 'which comes from the Prophet. About a hundred years ago it was stolen from the Great Mogul by the English. Later it fell into the hands of a German prince . . .' I interrupted him: 'It was in Vienna that it was given to me, by M. de Hammer!' 'Go at once,' said the Ambassador, 'to the empire of the Great Mogul. He has offered tons of gold and diamonds to the one who returns the ring of the Prophet. You will come back laden with riches.' You can imagine how I leaped with excitement. I came at once to find you, my dear Jan, so that we may get Gozlan and all go to the Great Mogul, who will be transported with ecstasy, and restore to him the ring of the Prophet. Come, the tons of riches await us!"

"And it is for this that you have got me up in the middle of the night!" exclaimed Jan.

"What! Do you think I exaggerate its value?" cried Balzac, bewildered by the indifference of his friend toward the fascinating prospect opened up by the discovery of the ring.

"I stand by the first offer I made you," said Jan as he began undressing. "Will you take four cents for the ring of the Prophet?"

It would be impossible to record all the anathema which Balzac heaped on Jan's scepticism. With a passionate and terrible violence, like that of an enraged lion, Balzac stormed; but at last, worn out by his fury, he lay down on the floor and slept until morning, dreaming of the treasures of the Great Mogul. It was thus that Laurent Jan and I escaped a voyage to the Empire of the Mogul—a voyage which still awaits us. Balzac always spoke very discreetly, thereafter, about the ring of the Prophet; and we seldom saw it on his finger.

These dreams of riches, these dreams embellished with diamonds, did not exist in Balzac's imagination without cause. If he grew excited under the influence of a dazzling nightmare, it was because he had *Les Jardies* on his mind, and *Les Jardies* cost him a great deal, yet gave him nothing in return — save weariness, labor and worries without end. I have sometimes found Balzac at home in the morning looking greener than the leaves on his trees, all from having suffered so much in the rôle of landowner. I know a wall, not more than ten metres long by two high, which deserves fame no less than the walls of Thebes, of Troy, of Rome, or the Great Wall of China. This wall separated the upper part of Balzac's property (note particularly that I do not say all of his property) from the upper part of a neighbor's property — no matter what neighbor; all neighbors are alike. To understand this situation, imagine two beds whose pillows touch, but which are divided down the middle by wooden valances.

The land belonging to Balzac, already higher than the land adjoining, he raised several feet higher yet, with the result that a retaining wall was found necessary, to keep the added soil from falling onto the neighbor's property. So much for the origin of the famous wall at *Les Jardies*; the history of its misfortunes is the history of Balzac's tortures. It had hardly been raised when it gave way and scattered its lime and stones on all sides — on Balzac's land, and on that of his neighbor. Balzac sighed and rebuilt it. He was told by experts that the slope had not been steep enough; that if one were to increase the angle of resistance, the wall would not fall again. A month was required to reconstruct it along these lines. We were all happy over its completion. That morning it rained. In the evening we were playing dominoes in a room off the main corridor of the house, when someone knocked, and then quickly threw open the window:

"Monsieur de Balzac!"

"What is it?"

"Your wall has started toward the neighbor's!"

"Impossible!"

"Absolutely."

We secured lights and hurried to the fatal spot. It was a splendid sight. The entire wall, over-turned on its foundation, was stretched full-length on the neighbor's ground. For several minutes we gazed on the disaster. The next morning the tragedy was completed for Balzac by a multitude of summonses, verbal law-suits, writs, assignations, *etc.*, *etc.* This time, in falling, the wall had flattened some turnips, crushed some carrots, and smashed some parsnips. Heaven knows what the death of those miserable vegetables cost! In France only the death of a man can atone for the death of an apple- or a cherry-tree. People are afraid the respect for property may decrease. Personally I have always feared the contrary. But to continue. For the third time it was necessary to prop up the decrepit wall. More architects were called into consultation.

"The angle of resistance is sufficient," said they, "but the foundations should be made of brick and Roman cement. Brick is the only thing to use."

"We will build it of brick," muttered Balzac, hurling a magnificent look of black defiance at the heavens, where his own spirit was reflected.

He agreed, then, that the wall should be built of brick. It was done so thoroughly that the architects' bills were enormous. (Architects themselves are made of brick.) Thrice have I felled, and thrice erected, before the eyes of the reader, this wall of Ilion, but I can swear that actually it was upset and replaced more than five times. Weary of war, Balzac ended by buying the piece of land on which his wall liked to tumble. Then he said, with some pride:

"It is costly, but it is worth it. One is always glad to be able to collapse at home. Now my poor wall can at least die in its own bed."

Soon I shall take my place, with the reader, on the high terrace beside this whimsical wall — the terrace from which Balzac loved to look out over the cool, dark woods of Ville d'Avray, and I shall recount my interview with him the morning of the first, last and only performance of *Vautrin*.

V

Balzac had unexpected dramatic fits which, according to the various temperatures through which his inflammable spirit passed, resembled tempests or tornadoes; but never did he exhibit a serious and steady desire for a theatrical career. These fits usually seized him when he got within close range of a highly successful play. The fumes of wine drunk elsewhere then enveloped him, and mounted swiftly to his brain. For a rapturous month, or perhaps two, he dreamed only of the drama: historical drama, passionate melodrama, the comedy of manners, plays for the Comédie-Française, plays for the Porte-Saint-Martin, plays for the Gaîté. The very points of his pen quivered. He was going to work! . . . Oh, how he was going to work! For M. Samson, for Mme. Dorval, for Frédéric Lemaître. Especially for the latter, whom at that time he admired with absolute fanaticism, and whose fine feeling and magnetism he fully appreciated.

I have rarely seen Mlle. Rachel myself, but Balzac placed her a little below the level of great artists — just why he never explained. Nothing was further from the natural tendency of his complex imagination than bare tragedy. Nor could any force, great or small, lead him toward poetry. Do not misunderstand me. I mean here by poetry only rhymed verse. It would be a mistake to say that Balzac did not love idealistic thought, well-chosen images, a refined style, and certain delightful and long-established conventions. He liked poetry, but he did not like verse, and that's all there was to it! He respected verse tremendously, but he could not bring himself to read it. He appreciated its difficulties, but scattered

his praise at random, on the wing, and, as a sportsman would say, shot 'at a guess.' When he had recited some fragments from the *Méditations* or the *Orientales*, eulogizing Racine because he had heard that that writer, like himself, excelled in the portrayal of women, his tithe of enthusiasm for poetry was paid. With the receipt in his pocket he then could return contentedly to his prose, and for a long time afterwards there would be no talk about verse at *Les Jardies*.

In order to illustrate further Balzac's tolerant attitude toward poetry, I shall take the liberty of recalling an evening — a famous evening! — when he and I attended the Théâtre-Français. It was the première of *Les Burgraves*, and Victor Hugo had sent us two tickets for the balcony. The fate of the play was not long in doubt. Exclamations of disapproval, laughter, mutterings, mockery, hisses, clashed in mid-air beneath us, above us, in front and behind. — A veritable war! — The baptism of dramatic small-shot to which we all were exposed, from the highest to the lowest, rained down like big and little hail-stones, mercilessly, without pity on either Otto or Guanumara. The spirit of the occasion was a general gaiety, a diabolical jubilee; it was the putrid laughter of a first night failure . . . The envious laughed blackly, the friendly laughed lemon-yellow; the public, that great baby, laughed stupidly because it felt like laughing.

Suddenly I felt myself being tapped on the shoulder. It was Balzac, who was sitting behind me. I turned and saw that he, too, was laughing, but on the sly, in the manner of a conspirator, and in such a way as to make me an accomplice to the poisonous hilarity with which he was affected.

"How do you like this?" he asked.

I replied seriously: "I think it is wonderful. Take my word for it, not since Dante has anything so beautiful been written in any language. It is great; it is sublime."

"Just what I think," agreed Balzac, who had paid no attention to what I said, or perhaps had waited until I spoke before taking sides in the question which was being threshed out before us.

In brief, *Burgraves* went sky-high in his estimation that evening. And this is only one example of his inability to perceive thought beneath the fantastic cloak of verse.

When the dramatic fever seized him, it not only impelled him to discard all the ideas expressed or to be expressed in his novels, so that he might be free to write comedies and dramas for the Paris theatres; it also made him — Balzac, the independent, the close-minded! — willing to seek ideas of others, to entertain suggestions of collaboration, to consider the financial aspect of things! The moment an idea cropped up, it was considered from the business angle. That is how the theatrical element worked in him. Listen to his words:

"The idea I have is a grand one; it is brilliant and solid; it is rose-granite. From this granite we are going to carve, in great Egyptian blocks, a play for the Porte-Saint-Martin. I have Frédéric's promise. And with Frédéric — there is not a bit of doubt — it will mean at least a hundred and fifty performances at an average of five thousand francs. Think of it: SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND FRANCS! Now figure it out. Twelve percent for author's royalties will bring us more than twenty thousand francs. And that does not take into account the tickets, on which Porcher, whom I have already seen, will advance as usual five or six thousand francs in gold. Further, there is our share from the sale of ten thousand copies of the play. Three francs a copy — a clear profit of thirty thousand francs. In addition to all this there is . . .

It can be seen that, just as I have said, everything turned to business for Balzac, even before the idea was a perceptible germ. Before he had the thing clearly in mind even, he hurried to the Bourse to have it copyrighted. It was in the Place de la Bourse that he one day met Henry Monnier, whom he liked and admired very much. Monnier listened to one of Balzac's magnificent schemes, which was to net them each fourteen million and then said:

"Advance me a hundred sous on the idea."

We have already stated that when he was bitten by the theatre bug, Balzac would welcome collaborators with open arms. It was at such a time that he lured, along with several others, to *Les Jardies*, a good but weak young man named Lassailly — a wavering and dreamy spirit whom God has since called to him. Balzac had cast his eye on this uncertain intellect with the intention of making him his dramatic collaborator — a task of which the boy was as incapable as he was of writing *Eugénie Grandet* or *Le Lis dans la Vallée*. It was utterly impossible for me, and for others as well, to divine what strange reason Balzac had in making such a choice. Raphael engaging a stonemason from Transtevere or a slater from Ostie to help him paint his pictures would not have been more bizarre.

Although one needs testimony to believe it, Balzac was sufficiently serious in the matter to honor Lassailly with a promise of his collaboration over a period of years. Was this agreement ever recorded? Was it drawn up in legal form? Was it written at all? I do not know, and I doubt if it was. But it is well known now that the terms of the agreement were discussed and decided upon. I can even affirm, from my recollections and from the recollections of others, that at the time of which we speak, the terms were fairly well understood. The principal condition was that Lassailly, chosen by a strange fate to be Balzac's official collaborator, should be comfortably lodged, furnished with heat, light, food, *etc.*, at Balzac's expense, and that he in turn should keep himself constantly at the disposal of Balzac, furnishing him with dramatic ideas, plots, and whatever might be needed, whenever such need arose.

To Balzac's credit it may be said that Lassailly was immediately so well put up at *Les Jardies*, so quickly and thoroughly accommodated with heat, light, and nourishment, that in a very few days he acquired a plumpness which one could scarcely have expected from a person of so delicate a constitution. Balzac, we maintain, was thereupon fully acquitted of any further responsibility in the matter of the contract.

And how did Lassailly fulfill his obligations? He slumbered lazily in complete idleness. He did not neglect any of his meals, but he neglected utterly the dramatic ideas which he was to have contributed. His attitude was certainly not that of an employe, or, if you prefer, an associate. Balzac pleaded with him, justly enough, to fulfill his obligations, and Lassailly admitted that Balzac's demands were entirely legitimate. It was a problematical state of affairs, painful and full of disagreement. Another consideration was that Balzac worked almost exclusively at night. It would therefore be at two or three in the morning that he would call imperiously to Lassailly and demand that he get up and work with him.

What a terrible moment it would be! The timid collaborator, stretching sleepily, would hurriedly dress, or half-dress, and with one foot bare, the other shod, his cotton cap pulled over one ear, his face filled with consternation (and Lassailly was capable of awful consternation!) would run as softly as possible, a candle-stick in his hand, through the deserted rooms which lay between him and Balzac's lonely study. Pathetic journey! Arrived at the feet of the master, a master pale with sleeplessness, yellowed by the splotches of light which fell upon his brow and cheeks, (for the Balzac possessed at night by the demon of labor had nothing in common with the Balzac of the street and salon,) the master would say to him:

"Well now, Lassailly, what have you thought up?"

And Lassailly, adjusting his cotton cap, and opening wide his eyes still covered with a film of dreams, would stammer:

"Yes . . . we will have to think up . . . It will be a good thing to . . . to hit on something . . ."

"Oh, you have hit on something! Well, let's hear about it. The Porte-Saint-Martin is waiting. Let's hurry! Harel wrote me again yesterday. So let's hear about it! I saw Frédérick Lemaître the day before yesterday . . ."

"Oh, you saw Frédérick Lemaître?"

"Yes, and he is all for us. He longs for a play that will set Paris talking. Now where is this play? Eh?"

"Eh?" Lassailly would repeat, his forehead wrinkled from the difficulty of paying attention.

"Have you this play, Lassailly?"

"Not finished, but . . ."

"But you have it partially done?"

"Yes, and no."

"What do you mean?"

"I had rather you told me first," Lassailly would murmur, "what ideas you have. Then we can put them with mine, and I am sure . . ."

"Lassailly, you are asleep!"

"Oh, no!"

"But you are! . . . You're asleep standing up, I tell you. See there! Your eyes are shut!"

"I swear . . ."

"You are yawning!"

"I am a trifle chilly . . . that is . . ."

"Go back to bed, Lassailly. Perhaps in an hour or so the muse will visit you."

Then, picking up his pale candle, and dragging his slippered feet as he went, Lassailly, like a desolate ghost, would return to his own room, to the soft bed where he was supposed to discover, as he lay stretched out, the theme of this famous play which was to be the talk of Paris. — His rest would be brief. In an hour Balzac would have bells ringing all over the place, to rouse Lassailly from his slumbers. The poor boy would start up and run barefooted, clothed only in his knitted drawers, to his master's study. There he would dissemble as best he could, and the dialogue previously indulged in would be repeated — Balzac as alert as a lion, Lassailly as passive as a dormouse. One can imagine that the results were always the same. Balzac wanted a play at any price. Lassailly could uncover one at no price. As many as six times a night the excellent but sterile collaborator would be called upon by his literary chief. The problem was much more a physical than a mental one.

The upshot of it all was that Lassailly, in spite of better and better nourishment and care, grew pale, declined, and fell seriously ill. These sudden awakenings at night, together with his utter incapability of fulfilling the terms of the contract, troubled his poor mind. Encountering him one day on the Boulevard de Gand, at the corner of the Rue Laffitte, I asked:

"Well, how are things at *Les Jardies*?"

"Oh, I have left *Les Jardies*," he replied, raising his arms and his eyes to heaven — those eyes which were always filled with a mist of tears — "I have left it forever."

"But you were well off there, weren't you?"

"Very well off! What a wonderful place to live! Such surroundings! Such a pleasant existence! Roasts every day; vegetables twice a day; plenty of desserts; and such coffee!"

"Well then, what happened that made you leave?"

"You ask what happened! Who could possibly stay there? Getting up six times, perhaps eight times a night! Eight times! And that is not all.

A pistol at your throat forcing you to invent a play that would take Paris by storm. Human endurance," continued Lassailly in tears, "is not equal to it. I, who had already suffered so many passions and vicissitudes, could tolerate it no longer. Never as long as I live will I set foot again in *Les Jardies*."

He kept his word. Not only did he never return to *Les Jardies*; he never uttered the name of Balzac except in a kind of half-terror.

VI

Giving in finally to these irresistible impulses toward the theatre, Balzac determined to brave the dramatic sea, and round the Cape of Storms. In my opinion the time was badly chosen, the occasion the worst possible. It was too late — much too late. Not that Balzac was too old to master an admittedly difficult art, for a strong intellectual constitution can bear up to the very end — but it was too late for the one and sufficient reason that Balzac was at that period of his life entirely too celebrated a figure to be forgiven a fresh conquest, an attempt to win glory in a new field, the most envied of all fields, the theatre.

What! Was it not enough to be read and admired in every salon of France, Italy, England, Germany, and Russia? To be translated into every language? Having received the delicate applause of hearts and eyes, must he seek also the loud applause of hands? Really this man must think himself a Charlemagne, a Charles the Fifth. He dreams of a world-wide literary monarchy!

In these astonished questions there was a clear declaration of war against the daring author. How could Balzac fail to perceive it — he, the subtle inquisitor of all ideas; he, as clever and sharp-eyed as an old police magistrate; he who had so often stripped off, skin and all, the mask from the face of humanity? Could he not know that the envy, the hatred, the jealousy of those who were unable to attack his irritatingly successful books, could lie safely hidden in the dark corners of a theatre-box, and from that vantage-point kill at leisure the play and the author — their pleasure in killing increasing with the beauty of the play and the greatness of the author? This danger is much less great, though it is always present, when the writer takes care to keep a foot in each camp: one in literature, the other in the theatre, and raises himself a bit at a time, first in one place, then in the other. It was this method which lifted Voltaire to the plane of genius, and Frédéric Soulié to the plane of talent. Balzac overlooked these tactics, and he was beaten, constantly beaten. There is not the slightest doubt of it. The so-called success of two or three of his comedies performed since his death does not constitute an argument to the contrary. So long as he was not present at their performance, why should anyone hiss? Besides, there is no danger of his writing more! — What an advantage! — And besides that, he is dead! — What a virtue!

Prudence was, then, completely lacking in Balzac's resolution to write so tardily for the theatre. Having committed this folly, he proceeded to increase the feeling which had been aroused against him. Was it not deliberately to increase it that he invaded the theatre, armed with the most ticklish, the most dangerous subject in the whole collection of French public prejudices.

The French public — is it not made up of six times as many hypocrites as one would ordinarily find in a first-night audience? Of six times as many fraudulent bankrupts, and debauched women as hang over the railings of stage-boxes and balcony; six times as many members of the goitrous *bourgeoisie*, cretins, idiots, cripples, and villains as fill the second and third galleries at a première (and do not think this an exaggeration, either); it is an assemblage hide-bound by the purest literary principles, the purest religious principles, the purest social principles, by all the purest principles imaginable. Beware! No subject must be even slightly dangerous; no person very eccentric; no style too new. The daring spirits who are ingenious, and who dream of outwitting these ambushes and traps, do not employ the tricks of the writer, but rather the tricks of the acrobat. They dance for three hours on a tightrope over a red-hot fire. The emotion they arouse may be expressed as follows: Aren't they going to fall? Won't they fall in the fire? It is a hundred to one they will fall and be killed. — What chance, then, have the others, like Balzac, who are not even equipped with these virtually futile tactics? Balzac, with lifted visor and magnificent disdain, attempted the impossible when he challenged the theatre. He encountered the absolutely impossible.

But let us return to *Vautrin*, his first blow directed at the monster.

It was in the Porte-Saint-Martin that the blow was struck. A very intelligent, but also very ill-fated, director was Balzac's ally. This extraordinary man — the director — had tried everything: classical tragedy, romantic tragedy, comedy and fantasy, educated apes and trick elephants; he had carried his directorial nerve to the point of asking a loan of thirty thousand francs in silver from Louis-Philippe. The latter, little given to lending, had replied wittily: "Monsieur Harel, I was about to make the same request of you!" This director accepted Balzac's play as a drowning man grasps at a life-line. It was a veritable ark of salvation, coming to him after not one, but a thousand floods. Harel believed himself saved! He was so eager — these details are as clear in my memory as though they had happened yesterday — he was so eager to get hold of Balzac's first play, his virgin effort, that he accepted it before it was completed. Strictly speaking, one can say that he got nothing at all. Never mind! This nothing in five acts of prose by M. Balzac was accepted with great joy.

It should be stated here, in order to explain the preceding passage, that Balzac, by long-established habit, negotiated for the rights to his work

before it was done — no matter whether it was a novel, a short story, or an article. In this way he made full use of the stimulus of necessity. And it is only fair to add that he was a fanatic in regard to keeping his word. As soon, therefore, as the contract with Harel was agreed to, he ran and imprisoned himself in the fifth floor home of Buisson, the tailor, in the old Hôtel Frascati, at the corner of the Rue de Richelieu. There, with the assistance of a patient copyist, whose business was, I believe, the editing of a small opposition newspaper, he began the composition of the famous play, *Vautrin*. His daily affairs — we might as well say his hourly affairs — hardly allowed him to stay at *Les Jardies*, where he had lived rather irregularly heretofore, and where he lived henceforth at very uneven intervals.

The road which opened before him at this juncture was the roughest, the most depressing that he had ever traveled, in spite of his experiences with the booksellers of Saint-Jacques, the editors of the Pantheon, and the discounters perched on the hill of Passy. He was obliged to create, destroy, and re-create daily, every scene, every phrase, of his play. He had to do so in order to satisfy the thousand and one demands of the actors, who were especially insistent upon having their rôles fixed to suit themselves once they realized that the play was still in process of execution. He was dragged from one side of the stage to the other by the distressed complaints of an impatient director, who was desperately eager to make money. More than once Balzac was at the point of refusing to go on under the strain. The experience altered him terribly. Two and a half months of rehearsals rendered him almost unrecognizable. His sufferings became so well known that people would wait on the street to watch him going home after rehearsal. His great blue, square-cut coat, his large, nut-colored Cossack breeches, his white banker's waistcoat, his enormous shoes, with their tongues hanging outside the trousers instead of being tucked beneath them — all his clothes were twice too big for him, and were splattered with mud (the streets had not yet been paved) — his whole appearance proclaimed the disorder, the trouble, the inconceivable confusion into which he had been thrown by his dramatic ventures.

And what a tiring amount of conversation he had to exchange with everyone whom he met, and who wanted news of *Vautrin*! Where were the rehearsals being held? What did Frédéric Lemaître think of his part? Was Raucourt satisfied with his? Was it true that the honest Moessard, who claimed to have lived a spotless life for sixty-five years, had refused disdainfully to enact the rôle of Joseph Bonnet, the former accomplice of Vautrin and Charles Blondet in their tricks and misdeeds, the present *valet de chambre* of the Duchess of Montsorel? Was it true that the upholsterers, the mechanics, and the painters, had quit work because their pay had not been forthcoming? — It happened that Balzac, excellent and inexhaustible paraphraser, succeeded in satisfying all these

peripatetic inquisitors. He did it chiefly by repeating on every occasion the heated remarks he had heard from the lips of M. Harel, that extraordinary man who had stood face to face with misfortune and cried defiantly: "We shall see who is the stronger!" It is also true that while Balzac retailed on the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle the Voltairean eccentricities of Harel, the latter, as he leaned against a tree on the Boulevard Saint-Martin, his fingers thrust in his gold snuffbox, recited the vivid eccentricities of Balzac; whereas Jemma, an actor connected with the same theatre, as he stood outside the café of the Porte-Sainte-Martin, repeated the words of Balzac, the words of Harel, and the words of Frédéric — in fact, all the wit heard in that charming and unfortunate theatre, which was never gayer, more amusing or more spirited than then. It was becoming the *Gil Blas* of theatres.

VII

It was once during these arduous days, physically and mentally, that Balzac stopped me on the Boulevard des Capucines, and said dejectedly: "My dear friend, I am dying of hunger. It is three o'clock; I have just come from rehearsal, and I have had nothing. Let us go eat."

"But I am not hungry, and I have not just come from a rehearsal, thank God!"

"So much the better for you. But you will come with me, won't you?"

"Well then, let's turn back to the Café de Paris."

"Not the Café de Paris; it is too late for breakfast and too early for dinner. Some other place."

"But where do you want to go?"

"Follow me. I have discovered a very good place — a wonderful pastry-shop. You will see for yourself. Are you familiar with rice-cakes?"

"This sounds rather silly."

"Wait till I tell you. Are you familiar with small macaroni pies?"

"Really . . ."

"You are not! Come on!"

"Is it very far?"

"The Rue Royale."

And clutching me with his free hand — he had three or four books under one arm — he led me at a pace quickened by hunger, to the Rue Royale, to the remarkable pastry-shop which he had discovered, and which, I presume, is still there.

We entered.

"Some of the little macaroni pies!" cried Balzac. "We will take them all."

"There you are, gentlemen," said a young English girl, as she drew an iron plate from the polished copper stove.

Balzac deposited his books on a table and prepared, as near as I could guess, to hurl himself upon the little pies with the ferocity of an ogre.

"Do you know what this book is?" he asked me.

"No, my dear Balzac."

"This," he explained, "is Cooper's latest work: *Lake Ontario*. It is beautiful! It is great! It is tremendously interesting! He owed us this masterpiece after the two or three rhapsodies he has given us recently. I want you to read this. No one but Walter Scott ever achieved such grand effects, such perfect coloring. If Cooper could only have painted humanity as skillfully as he has painted natural phenomena, he would have said the last word in art. Unfortunately . . ."

"Unfortunately, you are not eating," I interposed.

"Quite right."

Walking about the shop, laughing, and praising Cooper, he swallowed in three or four Gargantuan gulps, two macaroni pies, then two more — to the great stupefaction of the English girl, who evidently was astonished at the greed of a man who she supposed lived upon flowers, air, and perfume. Her astonishment did not seem particularly affected, either.

"Since this sort of novel pleases you so much," said I, offering Balzac a glass of water — I knew he did not want wine — "why shouldn't you write something in which the action takes place on the shore of a lake, as it does in Cooper's latest work?"

"And where the devil do you expect me to find the lake? We have nothing but cisterns and ponds. The Lake of Enghien, I suppose!"

"But you know lots of travelers; get them to talking when they visit you at *Les Jardies*. Many of them, I know, are only stalks of sugar-cane, long, tufted, and stringy; but if one presses them long enough one can extract sugar and rum from them."

"Oh, my dear friend," replied Balzac, as he lifted the glass of water to his lips, "*if you only realized how many of them know nothing!* Do you need proof of this terrible fact? Then here it is . . ."

And devouring two more macaroni pies, he went on as follows:

"When I was planning to write *Le Lis dans la Vallée*, I fully intended to include, after the manner of Cooper, some magnificent descriptions of nature. Following this idea, I plunged into nature pantheism, like a pagan. In turn I became tree, spring, horizon, star, fountain, light. And as science is a great help in any emergency, I sought out the names and the importance of a multitude of plants with which I expected to strew my descriptions. The first thing I did was to try to discover the names of the little weeds which we trample in the fields, which grow along the edges of roads, in meadows, in fact everywhere. I inquired of my gardener.

'Ah, Monsieur,' he said, 'nothing could be easier.'

'Well then, since it is so easy, tell me.'

'That is lucerne-grass; this is clover; that is sainfoin; this is . . .'

"I interrupted him: 'No, no, no! I asked you the names of these thousands of little weeds that we trample on, that we pull up. Now!'

'Indeed, Monsieur, they are weeds.'

'But the names of these myriads of weeds: long, short, upright, curved, sweet, piquant, rough, soft, wet, dry, dark green, light green.'

'All I can say is that they are weeds.'

"I could get nothing more out of him. Only 'They are weeds.'

"The next day a friend was coming to see me: one of those very travelers whom you were just praising. I examined him on the subject in much the same manner. I said:

'You are a botanist, and you have traveled widely. Do you know anything about these little weeds that are everywhere underfoot?'

'Of course!' was his reply.

'Well then, tell me their names.' And I plucked a bunch of weeds and put them in his hand.

'The point is . . . You see,' he said after several minutes' examination, 'my knowledge is practically limited to the flora of Malabar. Now if we were in India I could tell you without hesitating the names of thousands upon thousands of little plants. Here, however . . .'

'Here you are more ignorant than I am.'

'I admit it,' confessed the traveler.

"Angry at the failure of my second attempt, I hurried next day to the Botanical Gardens. Here I spoke to one of the most learned scholars attached to the institution.

'Oh, Monsieur Balzac,' said this celebrated naturalist, 'you do not realize what you are asking me. We concern ourselves a good deal with the larch family, and with the not less interesting tamarisks; but life is too short for us to worry about all the insignificant little weeds. That is the business of a salad-merchant. But seriously speaking, where is the action of your story laid?'

'In Touraine.'

'Well then, the first rustic you meet in Touraine will be able to tell you more of what you want to know than any professor here.'

"So I left for Touraine, and there I found the peasants as ignorant as my friend the traveler, as ignorant as my gardener, but not a bit more ignorant than the professors at the Botanical Gardens. As a consequence, when I wrote *Le Lis dans la Vallée*, I was unable to describe accurately the greenswards which I should so like to have depicted blade by blade, in the clear and painstaking Flemish manner. And now you advise me to rely upon travelers for the local color necessary to describe a lake. We must face the facts, and not be too critical of the witty Abbé Vertot, 'because of his remarking, *'Mon siège est fait.'* He had imagined his bishopric much better than others could have described it to him. Still, there are things one cannot imagine."

"How much do I owe you?" asked Balzac then of the girl who had served the little pies.

"Nothing, Monsieur Balzac," she replied in tones so determined that there was no possibility of argument.

Balzac looked at me. He seemed to be asking, "What shall we do about it?" But instantly he found the proper response to this gallant gesture, for, handing the English girl Cooper's novel, he murmured:

"Mademoiselle, I shall never regret anything so much as not having been the author of this."

And he left the book in the hands of his naïve and astonished admirer.

VIII

Meanwhile the great day of production approached. Journalists whetted their knives; the tigers of first-night performances sharpened their claws. It was whispered that in spite of the many pleasant anticipations of the evening, the censors did not altogether approve of the production. There was uneasiness regarding the introduction of *Vautrin* on the Paris stage, into the midst of a respectable atmosphere, when its mission was to reveal weaknesses of the heart and errors of conjugal love. It was even reported that certain influences from very high quarters were, for these and other reasons, being exerted against the production.

There was evidently some exaggeration in these rumors, for only a few days later the play was performed. Balzac turned the last few days to good account. Always an innovator, he put into effect a scheme which was highly characteristic of his genius, and which had never been tried before by an author — at least we may assume it had not. Foreseeing the extraordinary demand for seats which was bound to come from the multitude of readers whom he had delighted for so many years, he grasped the opportunity to speculate in the sale of tickets, and with the permission of the director of the Porte-Saint-Martin, who was pleased at Balzac's initiative, he took personal charge of the whole business. As a result, a large sale of tickets was assured, and further, it seemed as though all the spectators were to be favorably inclined toward Balzac and the play. We shall soon see, however, that the latter supposition was false. What is true is that all the tickets were sold profitably, and re-sold even more profitably, with bonuses, by the first buyers. Not since the premières of Victor Hugo's plays had such public curiosity been aroused. It was an event. Although at this time political conditions were exciting, and the agitations were brewing which resulted in the terrible revolution of 1848, one heard of nothing but the forthcoming presentation of *Vautrin* — not even of banquets and foreign affairs, not even of England and Egypt. It was a magnificent and just tribute paid spontaneously to a European genius, deserved because of his ability to create such a superb diversion, unique, perhaps, in the history of art.

At last the hour struck; the irrevocable hand-bill announced the first performance of *Vautrin*, a prose play in five acts. After this magic title

one read the names of the persons in the play, and opposite these, the names of the actors representing them. I transcribe this list here, from the very copy of *Vautrin* which Balzac gave to his intimate friend, M. Laurent Jan, to whom he also dedicated the work.

<i>Characters</i>	<i>Actors</i>
Jacques Collin, known as <i>Vautrin</i>	MM. Frédérick Lemaître
The Duke of Montsorel	Jemma
The Marquis Albert, his son	Lajarriette
Raoul de Frescas	Rey
Charles Blondet, known as the <i>Chevalier de Saint-Charles</i>	Raucourt
François Cadet, coachman, known as the <i>Philosopher</i>	Potonnier
Fil-de-Soire, a cook	Frédéric
Buteux, a porter	E. Dupuis
Philippe Bolard, known as <i>Lafouraille</i>	Tournan
Joseph Bonnet, valet to the Duchess of Montsorel	Moessard
A Commissary
The Duchess of Montsorel (Louise De Vaudrey)	Mmes. Frédérick Lemaître
Mlle. de Vaudrey, her aunt	Georges, the younger
The Duchess of Christoval	Cénau
Inès de Christoval, Princess of Arjos	Figeac
Félicité, maid to the Duchess of Montsorel	Kersent

After the cataclysm, when nothing was left of *Vautrin* but this strange assortment of names — some overflowing with nobility, others smelling of the gallows, it was easy to form an idea of the appalling task which Balzac had set himself when he determined to compose a comedy of elements as inimical, as far removed from each other, as the sun and earth. How was he to make these thieves, these swindlers, these marquises and marchionesses, these dukes and duchesses, breathe the same air, tread the same stage, rub elbows in the same room? Above all, how was he to link them by common interest to a single action? That was the problem he faced. Did he solve it satisfactorily? That is just the point.

We have come now, in a perfectly natural way, to the story of the first performance — so eagerly awaited — of *Vautrin*.

Making up the first-night audiences is the absorbing problem of the "director; it fills his dreams; everything depends upon it. Such an audience, according to whether it is well- or ill-intentioned, can assure him of a

long sequence of brilliantly successful evenings, or it can sink him outright. The intrinsic value of the play has something to do with the matter; but it is not usually the chief determining factor. The truth of this has long been recognized by theatrical directors, and is proved by the fact that even the strongest theatres, the subsidized ones such as the Opéra or the Opéra-Comique, dare not neglect the organization of their first-night audiences. Anyone who imagines that even the most celebrated opera or the most celebrated actress is put before the public on the basis of merit alone, is in grievous error. Adjoining the box occupied by certain dukes and princesses is another box containing, you may be sure, several friends of the management, prepared to support, in terms of warm disinterestedness, the play or the artist. Yes, the box was given free; yes, the fashionable lady leaning on the rail is instructed to stir up enthusiasm; yes, the electric spark which will set things off is at the tips of her gloved fingers. On a chair, in the darkness at the rear of the box lie the wreaths supplied by the management; and those bouquets which seem merely a necessary part of the toilet, a natural ornament to those who wear them, were paid for by the theatre. In the course of the evening, at just the right moment, they will be tossed on the stage, to the exact spot chosen by the director.

Balzac imagined that he had assembled for the brilliant occasion an audience more than devoted to his success. But he did not reckon on the time that had elapsed between the selling of the tickets and the first performance. This interval was rather long, and during it the handling of the tickets got completely out of his control, developing into a frightful traffic. Manias and bribes of all sorts came into play, with the result, that two-thirds of the seats changed hands, and passed into the possession of persons who were either strangers or enemies to Balzac. The gas-light, therefore, instead of revealing a well-regulated audience of friends, revealed a blustering mob, undisciplined, bigoted, scornful, having neither the good manners of a selected group, which had been counted on, nor the sincere frankness of a normal audience which purchases its authority at the door. The effect of this motley crowd was apparent from the start. The first three acts went through without any crisis; in fact they were received rather coldly, rather languidly. One scanned the audience, one waited, one did not know what to expect or from what direction to expect it. The ill-feeling seemed hesitant; the enthusiasm did not find expression. The ill-feeling, however, was gathering force and intrenching itself.

It burst like a shell during the fourth act when the actor Frédéric reappeared on the scene in the strange costume of the Mexican general, Crustamente, with a golden sash, a hat decorated with a bird of paradise, and a transatlantic accent. Murmurs drowned the voices of the actors; the actors faltered. The situation was critical. Disaster threatened; it descended outright when certain persons took it upon themselves to

point out the ludicrous resemblance between the head-dress of Frédéric and that of King Louis-Philippe, whose eldest son was sitting in a proscenium box. Such an unfortunate complication! The political serpent and the literary serpent intertwined — their double hisses accompanying the play, condemned to failure from that moment, in spite of the sometimes successful and always admirable efforts of the principal actor to save it.

The audience was no longer dignified or calm, respectful or considerate. Each box was the mouth of a great volcano, of which the pit was the crater: a volcano of mockeries, of sneers, of blasphemy, of slander, but also of defensive threats, for there were, here and there, a few warm friends, who remained loyal in the midst of all this unprecedented fury, this unbridled animosity.

The battle was definitely lost. To form an adequate notion of how disastrous the defeat was, one must read the newspapers which came around on Monday to collect the dead: to wit, a name great among the greatest, a daring play filled with magnificent faults, a ruined theatre, a director robbed of his last hope, an entire company of artists reduced to nothing. Of these newspapers let us quote one whose standing, practically official, gave its judgments then, as now, particular authority, and which was distinguished from all the others because of the literary fame attached to its editor:

“Yesterday evening we attended, from seven o’clock until midnight, a lamentable spectacle, and even this morning we have scarcely recovered from the profound suffering which one finds inevitable in the presence of such indescribable works, so utterly lacking in wit, style, grammar, polish, originality, and commonsense. Could we believe our senses? Could we trust our eyes and ears? Was M. de Balzac really the author of this miserable piece of barbarism and ineptitude? Alas! you cannot imagine how painful it is to be an eye-witness to the swift degradation of a man who for eight years has been our most brilliant writer.

“Where can one commence? I am incompetent to say anything on the subject. The best judge of such a work is undoubtedly the chief of police, M. Allard. He alone can tell you what is true and what is false in this drama. Aside from this, one can only give a synopsis, in which everything is softened, the rags concealed, the purulent wounds hidden, the leprous spots rigidly suppressed, and the heaped-up crimes kept in the background. Even then the synopsis must recount so many pollutions of the mind and senses that one would be bound to consider it overdone, malicious, and false.

“As for criticism, what can it accomplish — lost, bewildered, frightened, amid this pandemonium of all the wicked passions? What can it cling to, except vices, crimes, meaningless words, tortured emotions? In brief, what can one do? How can we lift to our lips this tavern-glass filled to the brim with drugged and heavy wine?”

After this preliminary appreciation of the play, the editor went on with his synopsis, pausing now and then to appraise the author's talent.

"Act Two. We find ourselves immediately in a most wonderful world, a world which M. de Balzac has discovered. He is himself its creator, its architect, its weaver, its purveyor of styles, its language instructor, its chamber-maid, its perfumer, its hairdresser, its piano-teacher, and its money-lender. He has made this world all that it is. It is he who sleeps on the sofas placed expressly for sleep and for adultery; it is he who burdens all his women with the same unhappiness. It is he who buys on credit, horses, jewelry, and clothes for his weak-chested, penniless, and heartless fops. He is the first to discover this livid veneer, this pallor of good breeding which distinguishes all his heroes. He has figured out in his fertile head all these attractive crimes, all this masked perfidy, all these ingenious violations of mind and body which are the ordinary incidents of his plot. The jargon which this unique world employs, and which only it can understand, is nevertheless a mother-tongue discovered by M. de Balzac. Which partially accounts for the ephemeral success of this novelist, who still reigns supreme in London and in St. Petersburg, as the most faithful chronicler of the manners and events of the present century . . .

"Loud voices demanded the name of the author. We listened carefully, hoping till the last that rumor had lied, and that we were dealing merely with some minor Corneille of the boulevards, inspired by Frédéric Lemaître. Alas! Alas! what we had been told was only too true. The good M. Moessard, an absolutely honest man, assured us it was M. de Balzac. It is a regrettable chapter to add to the story of human blunders."²

The day after the memorable production, that, on Sunday, the 15th of March, 1840, at about noon I went out to *Les Jardies* to see Balzac. He had gone there to escape the inevitable hubbub. It is easy to understand too, that he was anxious to get back to his lawns, his flowers, and his trees; to breathe deeply once more the pure air of which he had so long been deprived. I found him very calm, but noticed that his face was flushed, that his hands were hot, and that his speech, though composed, fell sadly from lips that appeared swollen, as after a feverish night.

"My dear friend," he greeted me before I had time to refer to the events of the previous evening, "I want you to notice that strip of land at the lower end of *Les Jardies*, it adjoins my property. Do you see it?"

"Certainly."

"I am planning to establish down there, in a few days, a mammoth dairy, to furnish the highest grade of milk to the nearby countrysides. I know they need it, for they lie between Paris and Versailles, two great sponges which suck up everything. I shall keep Rambouillet cows, which are, as you know, the most famous milch-cows in the world. After all

² *Journal des Débats*. March 16, 1840.

expenses are paid I shall be sure of a clear profit amounting to three thousand francs a year. Well! what do you think of it?"

My mind still busy with the events of the day before, I paid little attention to what he was saying, and consequently did not know how to reply. He continued:

"On this side of the strip of land you will notice another beautiful square plot . . .?"

"Which has nothing on it at all."

"At present, yes But wait. Under the direction of Louis XIV, the celebrated gardener Quintinie planted, in a field set aside for that special purpose, apart from the main gardens of Versailles, a rare and excellent species of vegetable, which was supplied only to the King's table. Louis XIV wished this cultivation to continue after him, for the benefit of his successors. The wish was granted. Louis XV and Louis XVI both ate of the favored vegetable. The Revolution greatly upset the royal kitchen-gardens, but under the Restoration they came back somewhat into favor. Lately Louis-Philippe has fully re-instated the tradition; the court once more enjoys the vegetables of Quintinie. But I am in a position to extend this pleasure to the upper classes, to the gentlemen of neighboring estates, for I have the necessary seeds, and I am going to plant them! It will mean another three thousand francs in profits! Do you understand?"

"That makes six thousand francs," I replied. "Three thousand from milk, and three thousand from vegetables."

"Nor is that all!"

"Pray go on."

"Look once more . . . there . . . to our left. On that piece of ground which has as marvellous an exposure as though it were in Malaga, I am going to have a vineyard — just like those of the South."

"Where the wine is detestable."

"Because they do not know how to cultivate their vines. I can tell you all about Malaga. This bit of land I am showing you is a veritable piece of sunlight; it is warm, dry, ferruginous; it is wine, and wine at three thousand francs a cask. Without exaggerating in the least, I am sure of making twelve thousand francs a year profit. Twelve thousand francs!"

"Besides three thousand from milk, and three thousand from vegetables. That makes, if I am not mistaken, eighteen thousand in all."

"That is correct. But let me finish. Look now in another direction. Observe the height of that magnificent walnut-tree."

"And that magnificent walnut-tree belongs to the township of Sèvres, or of Ville d'Avray," I replied. "You have told me so a hundred times."

"I have bought it! It is mine!"

"What! But great God! What will you do with it?"

"I will make it bring me an income of two thousand francs."

"Two thousand francs from walnuts!"

"Not from walnuts."

"From what, then . . .?"

"I will tell you in a few days. But this is what they have driven me to, by prohibiting further performances of *Vautrin*. To an income of twenty thousand francs!"

"*Vautrin* has been prohibited?"

"Read this."

Balzac then showed me the official letter he had just received. M. de Rémusat, through M. Cavé, of the department of fine arts, and without an explanation of any kind, forbade further performances of Balzac's play. And Balzac, as fecund in consolations for himself as in works of art for others, had already assured himself of an income of twenty thousand francs from cows, vegetables, grapes, and a single walnut-tree.

IX

One day in June, 1840, I received a note from Balzac, who was at *Les Jardies*, begging me to meet him the next day at three o'clock on the Champs-Élysées, between the Chevaux de Marly and the Café des Ambassadeurs. He was particularly anxious that I should not fail him, he added, for he wanted to ask a very important favor of me. As he always came on a similar mission, I racked my brain trying to figure out what he wanted, so I might be prepared for the difficulties which would inevitably stand in the way of my desire to oblige him.

But I could not imagine what was in his mind, and therefore remained until the next day in the grip of curiosity. The weather, for that time of year, was atrocious; although the best season in Paris is always atrocious. At three o'clock, as I came into the Champs-Élysées, a grey autumn wind, flecked with rain, was driving the leaves to earth; the sun was weak; it was cold enough for February or March; no one was on the streets; few carriages were abroad. But there was I, walking from the Chevaux de Marly to the Café des Ambassadeurs, looking carefully for Balzac.

My patience was not put to a severe test, for only a few minutes after three o'clock had been sounded in the Tuileries, I saw Balzac coming through the gate of the Place de l'Étoile, walking with that heavy yet rapid step, so characteristic of his elephantine carriage. Before he reached me he began explaining, most fluently, that he had come from Madame de Girardin's, where he had almost frozen to death. As a matter of fact he was as green as a drowned person, and he shook in every limb.

"How is it possible," he asked me, "how is it possible that a superior woman, a woman of brilliance and good sense, such as Madame de Girardin, can bring herself to live in the most impossible of lodgings, in a climate like ours; to live in a temple which has no god — that is, no

protection from rheumatism and inflammations; a temple with a portico, Ionian columns, mosaic pavement, marble facings, walls of polished stucco, cornices of alabaster, and other Greek embellishments, at forty-eight degrees and fifty minutes latitude north! And then, with the excuse that we are in the month of June, to have no fire on the hearth! Still, the whole forest of Dodone, cut down in three strokes, would not prove sufficient to warm such a monument. I give you my word of honor, she might as well have entertained her friends on a frozen lake in Switzerland. Well, when Madame de Girardin saw me rising to go, and said, 'You are leaving us so soon, Balzac?' I felt like replying instantly, 'Yes, Madame, I am going out into the street to get warm.' But enough of that. I have come to have a talk with you. Let us walk fast and improve our circulation, while you listen to me. I have just written for the first number of the *Revue Parisienne* a little story which pleases me, and which I will read to you one of these days, when I have found . . . something that I have not found yet, but which we are going to find together. I should, however, begin by telling you who the principal character is, or, to be more exact, who the unique character is, in this little study of morals—the woeful morals of our time which have resulted from the political conditions of the last ten years.

Balzac sketched, then, in great sculptural lines, the figure of this character—a figure too powerful, in my estimation, for the machine-made frame of the short story, but one destined, surely, in Balzac's own mind, to be transferred later to the less-restricted medium of the novel. He went on to depict, in the most intimate details, the life of this character he had created. It was the restless life of a man of genius—exploited by those who know nothing but ambition and intrigue—a man who, each time he had succeeded in establishing one of these others in a palace, returned to languish in misery and hunger on the floor of his own garret, where, after much suffering, he died, more a victim of deception than of privation.

"Now this is where I need your help," continued Balzac. "Such an extraordinary man must have a name appropriate to his destiny; a name which explains him, sorts him out, announces him as clearly as a cannon announces itself from afar: 'My name is cannon!' It must be a name which is molded on him and which can be fitted to the mask of no one else. Well, this name will not come to me. I have tried every possible combination of vocal sounds, but without success. There are so many stupid names!—Not that I am afraid of christening him with a stupid name; what I fear—or, rather, dread—is giving him a name which does not fit him as perfectly as the gum fits the tooth; or the nail, the flesh. Do you understand me?"

"I understand, but I do not agree . . ."

"What! you do not agree . . .!"

"No."

"You do not agree that there are names which bring to mind a diadem, a sword, a helmet, a flower . . . ?"

"No."

"Which reveal a great poet, a satirical wit, a profound philosopher, a celebrated painter?"

"No, no! I should sooner believe the exact opposite. Racine, for example!" . . .

"Yes, Racine! I was going to mention him. That name; does it not portray a poet, tender, passionate, harmonious?"

"I assure you that all it conveys to me is the thought of a botanist or a pharmacist — certainly not of a tender, pathetic poet."

"But Corneille? Corneille?"

"Corneille gives rise within me to the idea of a rather insignificant bird."

"But Boileau? That name — Boileau?"

"Suggests a pun — if you allow a slight change in spelling."

"The great Pascal?"

"A name borne by three thousand porters in Marais. All these names, I tell you, seem brilliant, great, sublime, to you simply because they have belonged to men of intellectual worth."

"I do not believe it," declared Balzac, terribly annoyed, and exhibiting his usual stubbornness. "We are named on high, before we ever appear on earth. It is a mystery which cannot be explained by applying the logic of our little minds. What is more, I am not the only one who believes that this remarkable correspondence between name and character serves as a talisman — infernal or divine — either to light a man's way through life or to destroy him. Serious thinkers have accepted this belief, and, strangely enough, in this one matter the crowd agrees with the thinkers. Which means, really, that everyone believes in it."

"Except me. But we will not spend any more time on my personal scruples. What you want is for us to find a significant name, a name which will classify and explain this character whom you have created, a name which corresponds . . ."

"Which corresponds to everything about him: his face, his stature, his voice, his past, his future, his genius, his tastes, his passions, his misfortunes, and his glory. Do you know one?"

"No."

"Well, I am exhausted from six months' effort to find it. I have already put in circulation more names than there are in the Royal Directory, and I feel absolutely incapable of discovering this one."

"Let's invent it between us."

"Impossible! I have already tried, haven't I? Besides, I have come to the conclusion, after a thousand futile attempts, that one can no more

manufacture a name than one can manufacture granite, coal, or marble. A name is the work of time, of revolutions, of I do not know what. It makes itself. It is no more invented than a language is. Tell me, if you can, who has ever invented a language?"

"If what you say is true, then all we can do is discover the name."

"That is all."

"Provided it exists."

"It does exist," affirmed Balzac solemnly.

"The question is then, where shall we find it?"

"That is just why I have asked you to help me."

After a few moments of thought I inquired of Balzac: "Do you wish to employ the method I so often rely on when I find myself embarrassed by the same situation — though of course I do not profess as sincerely as you, the religion of names?"

"What is your method?"

"I read sign-boards."

"You read sign-boards?"

"Yes, for on sign-boards one can read the most pompous and ridiculous names, standing for the most bizarre, and from the point of view of your system, the most contrary things. Some are fairly bursting with evil instincts, others breathe the sweet perfume of honesty and virtue; some captivate the hearts of vaudeville writers, who give them to their comic characters; others are transported from the wooden panel of the sign-board to the stage of the *Gaieté* and the *Ambigu*, where they become the names of villains. In reality they are the names of merchants, candle-makers, and confectioners."

"But," said Balzac, "it would be possible to read two or three thousand sign-boards before finding the name one wanted . . ."

"Yes, and then not find it. — But shall we try?"

"Let's try!"

The idea fascinated Balzac. I had not realized what I might be let in for.

"Let's try," repeated Balzac. "Where shall we begin?"

"We'll begin right where we are — here," I replied.

At that moment we were leaving the Court of the Louvre, and entering the Rue du Coq-Saint-Honoré, which was not then the large, imposing street it is today, but was twice as long, and was enveloped from head to foot in sign-boards, as completely as an Egyptian mummy is swathed in bandages.

"This is the place to begin," said Balzac.

We should have realized the uselessness of this first move. There were plenty of names, but names without interest, without any of the qualities which Balzac needed for his character. He surveyed one side, I the other: our noses in the air, our feet going in any direction, and frequently colliding with passers-by, who thought we were blind men.

After leaving the Rue du Coq, what other streets did we not traverse! And always with as little success. Along the Rue. St. Honoré to the Palais-Royal, then along all those in the neighborhood of the Jardin: the Rue Vivienne, the Place de la Bourse, the Rue Neuve-Vivienne, the Boulevard Montmartre.

At the corner of the Rue Montmartre, worn-out, sick of so much reading, and discouraged by Balzac's persistent rejection of every name I recommended to him, I refused to go further. I revolted.

"It always happens," said Balzac sadly, his eyes fixed on another series of unexplored sign-boards. "Christopher Columbus is always deserted by his followers. Onward! I alone will reach the shores of America. Onward!"

"But you are surrounded by Americas. You refuse to go ashore on one of them. You have rejected every name. It is not fair of you. Here are some superb names: belonging to German old-clothes dealers, Hungarian bootmakers, Westphalian shoemakers, and a thousand others: all of them highly expressive. You reject everything. You expect the impossible. Your America will never have its Christopher Columbus."

"Laziness is as unjustifiable as anger, in my estimation," was Balzac's reply. "Try leaning on my arm, and bear up as far as Saint-Eustache. This will be the three days granted Columbus by his followers."

"But not a step farther than Saint-Eustache!"

"Very well."

We resumed our search.

As I should have foreseen, Saint-Eustache was no more than Balzac's excuse to get me to survey, to their full length and height, the Rues du Mail, de Cléry, du Cadran, des Fossés-Montmartre, and the Place des Victoires — the latter a hot-bed of magnificent Alsatian names, tasting of the Rhine.

In the midst of this museum of names I swore to Balzac that if he did not immediately choose one, I would leave him.

"Only the Rue du Bouloi!" he pleaded, taking me by the hand. "Do not refuse me the Rue du Bouloi! Something tells me that we will eventually find . . ."

"Very well. I grant you the Rue du Bouloi!"

"Saved!" cried Balzac. "After we have done the Rue du Bouloi we will return to *Les Jardies* and dine."

The Rue du Bouloi, following the example of many other streets, possesses three names: a habit of superfluity which makes Paris topographically so difficult for strangers. At first it is called the Rue du Bouloi, then it becomes the Rue Coq-Heron, and finally the Rue de la Jussienne. It was in the last section of this street that Balzac — I shall never forget it as long as I live — after lifting his gaze above a little door, a scarcely perceptible, narrow, oblong door, which opened onto a dark and humid alley, suddenly changed color, experienced a thrill of excitement which passed through his arm to mine, uttered a cry, and exclaimed:

"There! there! there! Read! read! read!"

His voice shook with emotion.

I read: MARCAS.

"Marcas! Well, what do you think of it? Marcas! What a name! Marcas!"

"I do not see that that name . . ."

"Listen! Marcas!"

"But . . ."

"Be quiet, I say! It is the name of names! We need look for no other. Marcas!"

"I am sure I ask nothing better!"

"Let us proudly accept it: Marcas! My hero shall be named Marcas. In Marcas there is the philosopher, the writer, the great politician, the unrecognized poet. They are all in it: Marcas!"

"Indeed I hope so."

"You needn't doubt it for a moment."

"But if the name Marcas indicates all that you claim it does, then the owner of this door should really possess some superiority. Let us find out who he is, for there is nothing on the sign to indicate his profession."

"His profession will have to do with one of the arts, and a distinguished art, too. You may be sure of that."

I shook my head, but Balzac, ignoring my scepticism, continued:

"Marcas, who calls himself Z. Marcas, thus adding to his name a flame, an aigrette, a star — Z. Marcas, is certainly a great artist: an engraver, a sculptor, or a goldsmith like Benvenuto Cellini."

"Isn't that going a bit far?"

"With such a name one could not go too far."

"We shall soon know about that. I shall find the *concierge* and ask him about the profession of Monsieur Z. Marcas."

"Yes; go ahead."

I could not find the *concierge* in that house, so I left Balzac in a state of adoration, and eventually managed to find the one next door. I asked him about M. Marcas, and learned what I wanted to know.

"Tailor!" I shouted to Balzac.

"Tailor!"

Balzac bowed his head . . . but a moment afterwards lifted it proudly again.

"He deserves something better," he cried. "Never mind, I shall immortalize the name. That is my mission!"

The immortal tailor is still living. He is still tailoring in the neighborhood of the Bank — still under the name of Marcas, too, which anyone may read above his pretty little shop.

That very evening at *Les Jardies*, where we dined with the appetite of gentlemen who have read three or four thousand sign-boards, Balzac

wrote for the *Revue Parisienne*, as a foreword to his story entitled *Z. Marcas*, a monograph on that now historic name.

I quote from this curious monograph:

"There is a certain harmony which exists between a character and his name. This Z which precedes Marcas, which appears in the address on his letters, and which he never omits from his signatures — this final letter of the alphabet suggests to the mind heaven only knows what fatality.

"Marcas! Repeat to yourself this name of only two syllables. Do you not find in it a sinister significance? Does it not seem to you that the man who bears it is destined to martyrdom? In spite of its strangeness and barbarity, however, this name deserves immortality. It is well composed, easily pronounced, and short enough to suit a celebrity. Is it not as harmonious as it is odd? But does it not also seem incomplete? I do not care to go so far as to maintain that names exert any influence upon destiny, but between the events of life and the names of men there is surely a secret and inexplicable harmony, or else a perceptible lack of harmony. Often the correlation is slight, but it is still efficacious. The world we live in is rich; it contains everything. Perhaps some day we shall discover the occult sciences.

"Do you not perceive in Z a thwarted nature? Does not the uncertain and fantastic zig-zag symbolize a tormented life? What has breathed upon this letter which, in each language wherein it is employed, governs scarcely fifty words? Marcas was named Zephirin. Saint Zepherin is held in great reverence in Brittany. Marcas was a Breton.

"Examine this name once more. Z. Marcas! The entire life of a man is compressed in the strange combination of those seven letters. Seven! The most significant of Cabalistic numbers. The man died at the age of thirty-five. His life was thus composed of seven lusters. Marcas! Does it not give you the sense of something precious being dashed to pieces by a catastrophe — either loudly or in silence?"³

Balzac, having read to himself this introduction to his story, said to me, with more composure than he had shown in the Rue de la Jussienne:

"I shall always regret that this name was borne by a tailor; not, certainly, because I discredit the profession of tailoring, not because the word tailor brings to my mind certain debts, certain objectionable bills. I foresee that more than once I am going to be distracted in reading my work to you. Later on it will not matter. Z. Marcas will remain — will persist in spite of everything."

X

We have uttered that terrible word: *debts*. The debts of Balzac! We must not disappoint those who like nothing better than to see a delicate subject, a matter of the greatest privacy, passed from hand to hand,

³ *Revue Parisienne*, July 25, 1840.

until it becomes common property and is dragged in the dust. But we must bear in mind the serious danger which threatens the reputation of a celebrity who was so little favored by fortune at the beginning of his literary career, and who, though visited by her after long years of labor, experienced, in the interval, discouragements, attacks, buffets, storms, and sometimes wrecks. But when have the caprices of fate not been humiliating? Has not the road traveled by great men been always a stony one, filled with ruts? Corneille, Bayle, Erasmus, Diderot — to mention only four out of a thousand — were they not obliged sometimes to measure the rancid oil in their lamps, and to suffer with bitter smiles their ejection into the street? Which is to blame — fate or the man of genius? Which suffers? Which is reproached by contemporaries and hated by posterity? Fate, and fate alone! Let fate argue her case before the jury of public opinion.

These famous debts of Balzac, with which we are so concerned, which accompanied every step of his career, like followers in a procession; at which we smile secretly as we admire the marvelous creations of his brain; by means of which he kept in the public eye, at home and abroad; which he discussed with everyone, from the highest aristocrat to his gardener at *Les Jardies*, and always in the most amusing and irresistible manner — these debts, which threatened for a time to become as celebrated as his writings; these astonishing debts, did they, we may ask, ever really exist? Ludicrous and profound mystery! Let us lean over the edge of this dark pit and see what is hidden there? What will come forth — the truth or a great burst of laughter?

In my opinion, Balzac took care to let it be believed that he had debts, many debts, an enormous number of debts. His pride, legitimate and reasonable, compelled him to encourage as much as possible this harmless misconception — a misconception which was exaggerated and spread as much by his friends as by his enemies. Balzac, it must be regretfully admitted, did not earn with his pen the fantastic sums with which he has been gilded like a pagoda at Benares. He was very prolific, of course, but it is only fair to explain here why it was that the whole mass of his work brought so little monetary return.

To begin with, it should be made clear that the earnings of his final creative years were out of all proportion to those of the years which immediately preceded them, and that these years, in turn, were much more lucrative than the first few had been. Which means that we must strike an average. Furthermore, it is important to realize that he did not profit equally from his writing for magazines and his writing for newspapers. The remunerations were quite different. His work on magazines, however much honor it brought him, brought little else, for the simple reason that the magazines themselves were limited to so few pages. His work for newspapers paid much better. But, according to an agreement,

he was required to pay the cost of proof-corrections on his own work — Babylonian corrections! Cyclopean costs! — The sum due him, no matter how large, found itself, when everything was deducted, singularly thin and insubstantial. These two sources of revenue, therefore, even when united, did not form a very large stream. There remained the sale of articles, stories, and novels, and the reprints of newspaper material in book-form. But these, too, were financially a mirage. When the papers spoke of Balzac's having been paid thirty thousand francs by his editors, the fact was he had received three thousand. All these inflations, these dropsical superimpositions, created a decidedly false impression. The real total contradicted, day by day, year by year, the literary budget ascribed to the famous writer. Taking everything into account, except two or three bits of luck — did he have as many as three? — Balzac never averaged more than ten or twelve thousand francs a year, even during his most prosperous years.

This should clarify the matter and end all discussion.

But Balzac, as a popular writer, wished to keep pace — childish vanity! — with M. Alexandre Dumas and M. de Lamartine, and he could not, without swallowing his pride, allow it to be thought that he did not make an appalling income like the others. And in what other way, besides those we have mentioned, could he have created the impression that he was rich, and that he, like his rivals, had the philosopher's stone at the bottom of his inkwell? It was reported, of course, that one night at a masked ball at the Opéra a rich lady slipped a roll of bank-notes into his hand and then disappeared among the friezes. But who had ever seen this white lady and her magical money?

No! Balzac loved and fondly played with the illusion of this fortune which his books should have brought him, but which really he did not have at all. It was an extravagant falsehood; it made him a pseudo-millionaire. What little wealth he did acquire he acquired late; but his imagination was always richer than his coffer — he drew from it, and it was never exhausted. Unable to make a show with horses, carriages, and luxurious houses, he made it by the ancient method of comedy, which, incidentally, he had perfected admirably: that is, by means of his debts — these huge, proverbial debts, whose existence we have good reason to doubt.

A long time before, Balzac, who was caution and economy personified, had been involved in an unfortunate commercial venture, from which he had extricated himself with his customary honesty, and he was forever speaking of this affair, which was familiarly referred to at *Les Jardies* as the 'Kessner loss.'

"If we could only make good that Kessner loss!" I would say the moment he opened his mouth to recount the story of the printing establishment he had founded shortly after his arrival in Paris. It had been his everlasting ruin, he insisted.

Meanwhile, in order that these debts of which he complained should not appear utterly mythical, he found it necessary to allow a few actually to accumulate; but these were so trivial, so ridiculous, that they served no purpose. One day, being even more sceptical than usual regarding these fictitious debts, I said to him:

"Now see here, Balzac! You are a millionaire. All Paris says you are worth a million, a million that you have tucked away."

"I am worth a million, eh!" he cried, sweeping me with his flaming eyes. "Ah! I have tucked away a million! Well, yes, I have . . ." Then he added, "In a butter-jar."

I can see now his crooked finger pointing at the mouth of a butter-jar, in which he declared he had concealed his million.

It is apparent that these debts, when examined closely, and contrary to the ordinary laws of perspective, are more vague than when seen from a distance. When we try putting them in a clear light, they fade completely out of the picture, and thus allow us no end of freedom in discussing them. At this point I should like to remark that the silly habit of wishing that a great man could have been free from debt is one of those notions with which I find it very difficult to agree. That one has a natural prejudice against the vice of debts, and that one skips rather lightly over such spiritual weaknesses when they have been indulged in to excess, I am willing to admit—we must not be too quick to reproach Racine for having been fond of the Champmesle, or Mirabeau for having spent so many nights in gambling—but to whisper so cautiously in the ear of history the debts of an illustrious man, for fear of bringing a blush to the cheek of that solvent muse—nonsense! After all, when this man paid his debts, history could do no more than give him his receipt.

Let us come back now to these debts of Balzac, around which we have traced so many circles. They were so diverse, and at the same time so numerous, that eventually they broke the peace in which Balzac hoped to work at *Les Jardies*. The gate bell seemed always to be ringing. The word 'gate' is here used loosely, for the entrance to *Les Jardies* was a solid door, as solid indeed, as the one that belonged to good old Grandet, at Saumur. This bell, which may possibly have been of silver, and which I can hear now sending its sharp vibrations out over the tree-tops, was kept perfectly toned by the gardener—at Balzac's command. The reason for this was that Balzac thought nothing in the world would discourage a creditor—if he is capable of being discouraged—more than not finding someone with whom to speak: someone on whom to vent his anger, in case he feels violent; or someone at whom to fire his epigrams, in case he feels acrimonious. Balzac's idea was to have *Les Jardies* give the impression of being inhabited by persons who had just gone to Paris, to Versailles, or to an adjoining village.

The plan was ingenious, but it was not easily put into effect in such an

accessible establishment, comprising two large dwellings, and several out-buildings, occupied by the gardener, his wife and children, and visited daily by sight-seers and by friends.

Besides the dog! I had nearly forgotten him. A large dog, who had his kennel at the entrance, and was querulous, snappish, and — well, in fact, a country dog — the sort of dog one stupidly calls Turk. This one was called Turk. You may guess whether or not he barked!

But how, following Balzac's plan, was it possible to deceive the creditor who comes softly, rings the bell slyly, and then presses his sensitive ear to the door to learn whether or not he has made himself heard? How was it possible to smother instantly all sound, all activity — to convince the creditor that he had made a mistake, that he had taken a tomb for a house? Well, Balzac managed it. Long practice had rendered him an expert at this business. His method almost always succeeded.

This is what would happen at *Les Jardies*. First of all, we knew that if the creditor did not put in an appearance within five or six minutes from the time the Paris train passed, he would not arrive at all. We could then wait in safety and peace until time for the next train. As soon as we heard the roar of the approaching monster, the whole establishment quickened its vigilance: in the orchard, the field, the kitchen-garden, the cry was, "On your guard!"

The bell would ring! "Sh! It must be a creditor! . . . It is!" Each person walking in the grounds would halt beside the nearest tree, and would there remain utterly immobile; he would become a tree-trunk himself. We were Daphnes pursued by Apollo. Very pretty! The gardener remained bent over his spade, not even stirring. The dog, on the verge of barking, was pulled up sharply by the cord fastened to his collar, and thereupon renounced the idea of barking. He would grumble, but would be silenced by the hypnotic and imperious glance of the gardener's wife or son. Behind the green window-blinds, Balzac and his guests, quivering with fear and joy, would listen to the imprecations of the creditor outside the walls — magnificent blasphemies which invariably ended with the words: "Is everybody dead in there!"

Great heavens, yes! They must all be dead! And after coming so far, too! A wild-goose chase!

Then the creditor would depart. We would hear the gravel of the road crunch under his sacred feet. We would watch him studying the vegetation of the locality until time for the Versailles-Paris train. Then the fiery train would come and go. What followed was a resurrection. Blinds were flung open to the sun; pedestrians resumed their natural shape and continued their reveries; the gardener once more tended his plants; the dog barked joyously at the hens in the backyard; everyone was happy, care-free, and at peace until another ring at the doorbell. Then the same scene would be re-enacted — the same crisis would be endured.

XI

Before we leave this discussion of debts, we must mention, as one of the oddities which made Balzac's life at *Les Jardies* so memorable, the story of his relationship with one of his neighbors — a very patient neighbor, but no less peculiar than patient when it came to matters of credit. As we have already said, Balzac, with an innocence which completely overshadowed any slight trickery involved in his borrowing, had made so bold as to accumulate certain debts. He had acquired them, and too late regretted his rashness. For he found himself being gradually hemmed in by them until at last he could scarcely move from one spot. These unfortunate and extremely awkward obligations kept him from moving far beyond the confines of his own house. He, to whom exercise and freedom were so necessary, was actually unable to go abroad in daylight without encountering one of his local creditors: a groceryman, a milkman, a butcher, or a baker, from Ville-d'Avray. These debts were, of course, a terrible mistake. It is no doubt a bore to be indebted to God and the devil, but to owe one's neighbors is an intolerable situation: it closes the roads, cuts off the views, chains one's feet, and deprives one of the air itself.

One can easily imagine the lamentable effect of these suffocating debts.

Arriving at *Les Jardies* very early one morning — it was about five o'clock — I found Balzac walking round and round his rustic cottage, keeping closely to the strip of dry asphalt which he had laid along this circuit.

"Well, what are you doing here?" I inquired.

"You can see; I am walking."

"But so early in the morning!"

"So late, you mean."

"Late? But it is barely five o'clock."

"So late, I tell you! What do you want, anyway? I am sleepy. I should have gotten up earlier than this if I expected to have my walk in the wood."

"What keeps you from having it now, instead of walking round and round the house like a horse in a tread-mill?"

"No! no! it is impossible!"

"Why?"

"Because of the warden."

"The warden?"

"Yes, the warden. He will already be at work."

"But how can the warden prevent your taking a walk? You are not going hunting, nor are you likely to indulge in disorderly conduct. What has the warden to do with you?"

"I am certainly not going hunting . . . But see here," said Balzac, wishing to change the subject, "come in and let me read you my article for the *Revue Parisienne*. I think you will like it."

"No; let's hear it later. Why don't we go now and enjoy the morning air in the wood of Ville-d'Avray?"

"Oh, no! . . . Too late! too late! The Warden . . ."

"So we're back to that again!"

"Ah, he is a terrible man! Not, you understand, that he persecutes me, that he hunts me down as the others do. No, no! But his silence, his searching glance, his postures, his words which seem shot from a gun — they worry me; they freeze me; they petrify me. It is like meeting a ghost."

Balzac must have overworked last night, I thought, and is now suffering from an hallucination. It will be best to pretend not to have understood him, and to ignore the subject.

I took him by the arm and tried to hurry him.

"Come now! Do this for my sake if not for your own," I begged him. "Let's go and walk a few hours in the wood. Why not take our canes and walk about halfway to Versailles? Believe me, our appetites will be greatly improved."

Balzac was hesitant. "You really want to?" he asked.

"Please!"

Giving in reluctantly, he sighed and dragged his feet to the gate, where he took from a corner two huge iron-tipped staffs — I shall recount later our experience with these staffs, which I believe he had brought back with him from Switzerland — presented one to me, and together we set out along the edge of the wood of Ville-d'Avray.

Balzac's extraordinary apprehensiveness was apparent in his insistence that I lead the way into the woods, but he had grown quite calm by the time we had left behind us a hundred yards of tall ash-trees and lime-trees, which were still cloaked in the heavy mist of night.

We were talking, I remember, of the hopes — exaggerated, as usual — he had for the success of the *Revue Parisienne*, a rather questionable periodical, on which he was determined to get me in the capacity of director, when Balzac stopped abruptly in the middle of a sentence, and stammered:

"Here he is!"

"What?"

"It is he!"

"But who?"

"The warden!"

"Is this a fixed idea of yours?"

"It is less fixed than he is," Balzac replied, pointing out to me at the end of a lane along which we were walking, the silhouette of a warden — an unmistakable type, with his three-cornered hat askew, his gun hanging over his left arm, his loose shoulder-belt, his rustic gaiters, his grey hair, and his pipe welded to the corner of his mouth. It is true we could

not, from the distance, perceive all these picturesque details, but there was no doubt about the rural, official character of the man; he was a warden — only too obviously so.

Balzac had turned pale.

Meanwhile we were continuing straight along the lane, and the caretaker was coming steadily nearer.

"What did I tell you?" murmured Balzac.

"You mean this man . . . the one you were afraid . . .?"

"I knew we would meet him, no matter how careful we were. You didn't believe me . . ."

"But why should you be so worried?"

"It is easy enough for you to talk! If you were in my place . . ."

"But you haven't given me the slightest notion of . . ."

"You will have to guess it now, for there is not time to explain. Sh! We will face the situation firmly."

While we were carrying on this dialogue the warden was marching straight toward us. Soon he was only a few steps away. Never for a moment did he drop his rigidity, his military composure. One would have taken him for the guardian of the Commander's statue. Balzac had ceased speaking, and his worried look was fixed on the belted apparition before us.

When the warden came alongside Balzac, who still clung to my arm, he said to him in a low, but very impressive voice, "Monsieur de Balzac, this is becoming musical."

And he passed by.

Balzac looked at me, and I looked at Balzac. Both of us were amazed. "Did you hear that," he cried, when the warden had vanished into the grey mist which still enveloped the wood. "Did you hear that? My word! What a superb expression! It should be preserved in alcohol! 'Monsieur de Balzac, this is becoming musical.' Why, that is worth a thousand times the thirty francs I owe him!"

"You owe this warden thirty francs?"

"Yes, I have owed him it for three months. I meant to pay him today — Dutacq brought me some money last evening — but his remark was too gorgeous; we must repeat it over and over; he shall not be paid until tomorrow. 'Monsieur de Balzac, this is becoming musical!'"

From this incident we must return now to the main events of my chronicle: to the fulfillment of my resolution not to omit or to leave obscure any of the matters having to do with the inner life of *Les Jardies*, particularly those matters with which I am very familiar, and those in which I played a part.

Balzac, who first said, with fine understanding, "In every man of genius there is a child," was himself a living proof of this true and beautiful remark. A man of genius, he was extraordinarily childlike. The turbulent

schoolboy of Vendôme often dominated his leisure hours — hours too infrequent, alas! — and the author of *Physiologie du Mariage*, and *Eugénie Grandet*, and so many other marvelous works, allowed his feet to touch the earth. Then the worries of printing-shops vanished in thin air, and sheets of manuscript were hurled joyously in all directions, as in school when the recess bell rings. There was recess at *Les Jardies*. We played ball, or broke off branches from the chestnut trees in the wood, or ran down to Sèvres, to Saint-Cloud, to Bellevue, or to Boulogne, where we could joke with the fishermen's wives, and tell them smutty stories. Two or three times a month Balzac experienced these fits of Hilarity, and insisted that those of us who chanced to be his guests take part in the gayest and silliest of amusements. He himself lent to these innocent debauches a kind of dutiful gravity, which made them all the more ludicrous.

It is time we mentioned the fact that Balzac had, at *Les Jardies*, one neighbor who aroused all his spleen. What had this man done to Balzac, who had him haled into court twenty times? What words had passed between them? What damage had he ever done Balzac? This I have never discovered. But Balzac execrated him — execrated him as only he could — and one can say no more than that. He was utterly indifferent to the effect this profound hatred might have upon himself. It was an infectious hatred, which ended by inoculating the rest of us with a perfectly stupid ferocity.

When night came, Balzac would give each of us one of the iron-tipped staffs I have already mentioned, or else an old malacca cane, reddened with age around the bone handle, and rusted at its iron tip, and we would immediately set out, in silence, on our great expedition. Balzac, our chief, would precede us along the footpath which led to the wood of Ville-d'Avray, for in this same wood was located part of the property of his accursed enemy — an enemy whose name I remember perfectly, but which I do not care to record here, for fear, in case he is still living, of endowing him with a popularity which he does not deserve.

This property, spacious, well-kept, situated at the top of a ridge, and beautifully wooded, was surrounded by a wall three or four metres high — a simple wall of rough rocks, piled methodically one atop the other, and held in place by nothing but their own weight. This wall, or to be more exact, this regular mass of balanced rocks, was the target of Balzac's mysterious vengeance.

Arriving at the foot of this rampart, we would line up at a signal from our captain, each of us with his staff stuck in a gap between the rocks. This first manœuvre accomplished, we would throw our whole weight on our arms. Oh, it was a wonderful sight!

But to continue.

At the supreme moment, when we felt these loosened rocks on the

verge of tumbling, we would all cry three times, in unanimous anathema, echoed vigorously by the woods, the name of Balzac's abhorred neighbor. Then the rocks would topple, fall, and go rolling down for several seconds, shattering the sensitive silence of the melancholy forest, from hill to hill, as far as Versailles and Rambouillet.

The damage done, we would soon lose ourselves in the depths of the dark wood, and treading softly as wolves, would return to the tranquillity of *Les Jardies*, where Balzac, delighted with the escapade, would congratulate us on the complete success of our brave attack upon the property of his neighbor.

Eight days afterwards the wall we had demolished would be rebuilt. All the rocks would have been recovered and put back in place. Our duty now was to repeat the operation. We did repeat it. Heaven knows how many times this schoolboy prank was indulged in, and how many times the warden must have made out an official report of the matter, all to no avail, for lack of information as to who were the culprits. Who ever dreamed of blaming it on the great portrayer of morals, the great philosopher whom all Europe worshipped for his immortal novels — in short, on Balzac?

XII

These recollections would be sadly lacking if, in the list of past events which in spite of me sink deeper and deeper into the mists of obscurity, I should fail to mention Victor Hugo's visit to *Les Jardies*. The only one, I think, he ever made. Despite the consistent indifference which Balzac maintained toward contemporary writers, he was pleased and rather proud to receive in his house this celebrated rival. The interview was all the more significant for the fact that up to this time, and I may say, afterwards, as well, there was no real point of contact between these two superior minds. Balzac, whose affected admiration for poetry I have already referred to, did not care, either, for high-sounding, richly-colored prose — done in the manner of Rubens's paintings. A master of *pointillage*, he liked quick, staccato prose, obtained by means of Flemish economy, worked while cold, ground down to facets; genuine, of course, but with the genuineness of diamond dust rather than of the whole diamond. He did not withhold his admiration for the grand passages in *Notre-Dame de Paris*, but secretly he preferred the prose, fine as ground-glass, of Stendhal — which, after his own, he considered the model of all prose. Before the Venetian school of painters he would applaud so loudly that one would envy his enthusiasm, but for his study he would buy, you may be sure, nothing but Mieris, Teniers, and Van Ostade.

Furthermore, though Balzac had once or twice, in the *Revue Parisienne*, mentioned Victor Hugo, I doubt if Victor Hugo had ever so much as written Balzac's name. I cannot find a page of his work in which that

name appears. A strange, a very strange aversion to find between two such great masters of thought — though one to be found between many other contemporary writers. In this century, as a matter of fact, when one re-reads the authors of the period, one wonders if they could have lived at the same time, in the same country. The sixteenth, the seventeenth, and even the eighteenth century gave rise to intimate, decidedly personal, literary fraternities. They were like families. Being like families, they were often involved in feuds, in ferocious jealousies, and in violent hatreds; but eventually their communal interests stopped the battle, and prevented carnage. Nowadays they do not hate each other; they do not defame each other; they simply do not know each other. Is this an improvement, I wonder?

As a result of some accident befalling the Versailles train, Victor Hugo found it necessary to come to *Les Jardies* by way of Saint-Cloud, and consequently was late. Balzac was on pins and needles. So impatient was he that he could not stay a minute in any one place. Over and over again he went to see if there was no one coming down the little road. Time after time he paced from terrace to gate, from gate to terrace, lifting his nose with the palm of his hand, as he always did when he was greatly preoccupied.

Finally the gate-bell jingled. It was Victor Hugo.

Balzac, his composure restored, ran to welcome him, and to thank him effusively for bestowing such an honor on his modest country house. There was much more to this welcome than a mere shaking of hands. There was a familiarity of a noble sort. The imagination will do extremely well, as I am at this moment acutely aware, if it succeeds in reproducing for the future, with any degree of verity, the meeting of these two celebrated men under the bright trees of *Les Jardies*. It cannot paint in too brilliant colors the interview of these masters.

Balzac was picturesque in rags. His trousers, lacking braces, did not meet his large, banker's waistcoat; there was also a gap between his trousers and his run-down slippers; the bow of his tie had its points sticking close to his ears; his whiskers were of a luxuriant four-days' growth. As for Victor Hugo, he wore a hat of dubious grey, a faded blue coat with gold buttons, (a garment which in color and shape resembled a saucepan,) a frayed black cravat, and, to heighten the whole effect, a pair of green-glass spectacles (protection against the sun's glare) which would have delighted the head clerk in a county sheriff's office.

After a hurried breakfast Balzac proposed to his guest that we take a walk about his property. The three of us made the perilous tour — our last descent, most dangerous of all, bringing us onto the road to Ville-d'Avray.

Victor Hugo, contrary to my expectations, was very sparing in his praise of the property. In vain did Balzac remind him of details in the

Memoirs of Saint-Simon; compliments were not forthcoming. He showed a polite interest in the gillyflowers — that was all. I noticed that he had great difficulty in keeping from laughing at Balzac's strange idea of coloring the asphalt of the narrow little walks balanced so precariously along the sides of the garden, in order to lend them a bit of fashionable boulevard style. He did finally, however, discover an opportunity to pay the compliment which politeness demanded. He stopped, struck with admiration, before the superb walnut-tree to which we have so long promised to devote some space.

"At last, here is a tree!" exclaimed Hugo, who up to that time had seen nothing but rather sickly shrubs planted along the edges of the asphalt.

Balzac showed his pleasure at this eulogistic cry.

"Yes, and a famous tree, besides," said he. "I only recently acquired it from the community. Do you know what it bears?"

"As it is a walnut-tree," replied Hugo, "I presume it bears walnuts."

"You are mistaken: it bears fifteen hundred francs a year."

"From walnuts?"

"No, not from walnuts. But it does bear fifteen hundred francs."

"We're off again," thought I.

"Fifteen hundred francs, in silver," repeated Balzac.

"Then they must be enchanted walnuts," said Hugo.

"Very nearly. But I owe you some explanation. Without it you could scarcely understand how a single walnut-tree can bring in fifteen hundred francs."

We waited for the explanation.

"Well," resumed Balzac, "this marvelous tree belonged to the community. I bought it for a very large sum. Why? For this reason. An old tradition obliges every inhabitant to dispose of his manure at the foot of this venerable tree — and in no other place."

Hugo drew back.

"Do not be alarmed," said Balzac reassuringly. "Since I have owned the tree the practice has been temporarily discontinued. No inhabitant can escape this personal obligation, however; it is the survival of a feudal law. And think! just think of the quantity of rich manure collected daily at the foot of this urinal tree — municipal manure, which I shall cover with chaff and other vegetable waste, until eventually I have a mountain of fertilizer to sell to farmers, vintners, market-gardeners — all the neighboring proprietors, big and little. What I have here is bars of gold; or more exactly, guano! — guano such as is deposited on lonely islands of the Pacific by myriad birds."

"Oh, yes," replied Hugo in his phlegmatic, Olympian manner, "you are right, my dear Balzac. It is guano minus the birds."

"Minus the birds!" cried Balzac, laughing to the very tip of his monk-

ish chin at this description of his magnificent pile of feudal fertilizer — the unprecedented source of fifteen hundred francs revenue.

The bell announced luncheon.

We touched on many subjects during lunch, though it is easy to guess that most of them had to do with literature. Like a well-bred host, the master of *Les Jardies* gave the floor to his famous guest, and everyone knows how capable Hugo was of charming his audience with his magnetic style, his perfectly modulated voice, his precise and authoritative manner.

There having been introduced, among many others, the ever-interesting subject of the theatre — especially interesting to Balzac, who had always looked toward the theatre as toward a promised land — Victor Hugo discussed the pitfalls and evils of theatrical life, and then, at a single stroke, unveiled for Balzac all its marvelous advantages. Until that moment, I am convinced, Balzac had no clear notion of what constituted an author's rights. The revelation dazzled him. Had a diamond-mine opened before him with sun-like brilliance, he could not have been more bewildered, more blinded. He for whom written lines accumulated so laboriously under the point of a rebellious pen, and brought in at first only *centimes* — his genius was reckoned in *centimes* by the newspapers — later, by dint of much sweat, *decimes*; and finally, after absolute anguish, *francs* — he listened with the rapture of a martyr hearing the voice of an angel, to the account of Hugo's enormous earnings from plays. Earnings in Paris, earnings from the provinces; so much for three acts, so much for five acts; and then the revivals, the bonuses, the tickets, and heaven knows what all! Sometimes four hundred francs in an evening! All this silver, all this gold, gained while one merely walks about, or better still, while one is asleep, dreaming, with warm feet and softly-pillowed head! It took Balzac's breath away. And it was not so much the thought of the profits themselves that turned his head, as the thought of large profits earned without physical or mental fatigue. This idea transported him to the third heaven.

I am sure that the eloquent yet accurate description of the financial advantages connected with dramatic authorship, given by Hugo with the unction of Père Grandet and the exactness of a first commissioner of the exchequer, was chiefly responsible for the mania which Balzac had for the theatre, and which possessed him till the end of his life. For days afterwards he regaled me with a multitude of dramatic ideas, comic and serious, which he was to put on the stage at the earliest possible moment. It was only natural it should take some time for him to recover from his fever. Nor was I the only one who heard in confidence these new theatrical enthusiasms, born of that inflammable mind. In the long run, however, nothing much came of them. Nothing very serious resulted from the dramatic fever which, in my estimation, had its beginning at luncheon that day.

The conversation, following a natural descent, drifted then to the matter of the sinful and all but malicious indifference with which the Court of the Tuilleries had regarded literature and treated writers, even the most famous — those who, since 1830, by the promotion of a new school, had given life to literature and the theatre. Balzac, with bitterness on his lips, demanded to know if, lacking the patronage of Louis-Philippe, who devoted himself entirely to the middle-class, and elevated them above everyone else, one could at least count on the patronage of the Duke of Orléans, the distinguished wit and connoisseur, who seemed sympathetic with every one, and whose interest in the arts was so well supported by the young Duchess, his wife. Victor Hugo, by virtue of his familiarity with the household of the young prince, was in a position to answer this question.

"The Duke of Orléans," we were told by Hugo, "asks nothing better than to assume the leadership of a great new movement, in literature or the other arts, thus acting in accordance with the refined taste and highly cultivated mind of the Duchess. But I fear this will never come to pass. You may judge for yourselves. Let me tell you what happened recently at the Chateau."

Hugo then told us confidentially that the Duke and Duchess, realizing that both their official position and their personal taste demanded that they surround themselves with a circle of eminent writers and artists, had tried giving some evening at-homes in their rooms, as Louis-Philippe himself had done in former days at the Palais-Royal, when he was Duke of Orléans. Theirs were intimate evenings, however, without any political significance, and therefore were quite different from those at the Palais-Royal. At first everything went very nicely, and at the same time very cautiously, for fear of arousing the well-known animosity of *Père* — It was thus that the sons of the king referred among themselves to Louis-Philippe. They knew *Père* from experience. — Very few of the public to begin with — a highly selected group of guests; a rather aloof atmosphere, and above all, nothing noisy.

The place where these admirable and refined meetings were held was christened by the faithful members with a secret name. They called it "The Fireplace of the Duke of Orléans." Later on it became merely "The Fireplace." One would say, "Are you going to the Fireplace tomorrow?" Or, "Were you at the last Fireplace?"

The winter passed satisfactorily. To make use of an obvious figure, the Fireplace did not smoke at all. Either the *Père* knew nothing about it, or else he cared nothing about it, for there were few things he did not know of.

The second winter, our young husband and wife, encouraged by their former success, increased the circle around the Fireplace. More guests mean more noise. One snowy, windy evening, as the guests chatted over

the teacups, discussing a Turkish drawing by Decamps, a Florentine sculpture by Froment Meurice, or the style of a new novel, the Duke was requested to report to His Majesty. It was very late. What did the *Père* want of him? The *Père*, whom one had thought was in bed a long time ago?

Here is very simply what the father said to the son: Louis-Philippe to the Duke of Orléans:

"Ferdinand, I want you to know that at the Tuileries there should be only one king, only one salon, and one Fireplace. Furthermore, mine gives as much heat as yours. It will please me if you and the Duchess come there and stay."

The Duke of Orléans retired. His Fireplace was extinguished; the meetings, from that evening, ceased; and thereafter no one at the Chateau had the right to patronize literature and men of letters — the arts, and artists. The chimney-lid was on tight.

Seven years after this delightful luncheon at *Les Jardies*, seven years after this recital by Victor Hugo, a man of letters entered the Tuileries, swept forward by a terrific popular uprising. In the midst of the general plundering, he carried, on a sheet of paper, the last literature lesson of the Count of Paris. He showed it to us, still fresh, at the corner of the Rue Saint Florentin. The man of letters was Balzac; the day, unhappy one for royalty, was the 24th of February, 1848.

Balzac, who had listened attentively and calmly, however he may have been stirred within, to this bit of history destined, perhaps, to become some day a part of the great chronicle of our time, suddenly, without warning, sank his beautiful teeth in a dean's-pear the size of a melon, and delivered himself of a philippic — be sure the term is used here with absolute appropriateness! — a philippic worthy, in passion and oratorical fervor, to be classed with those of Demosthenes; superior, in fact, to the philippics of the prince of Greek orators in the sense that it did not smell of oil.

Unfortunately there is no adequate way of reproducing this piece of eloquence so interrupted, punctuated, and riddled by bites in the pear, by blows of the knife on the plate and the table, by the splash of words, by explosive looks, by the noise of bottles, by the thunder of curses and the flare of irony.

"Poor, stupid kings! unaware that after they are gone, no one would know, were it not for us, whence they came or whither they went, that they ruled, or even that they existed; what they did, what they thought, what they said. No one would know anything whatever about them! Yet behold! all the monuments of stone, of marble, of bronze, with which they burden the earth, in the hope of perpetuating their memory; all the

paintings which they hang in museums to illustrate their noble and useful deeds; all the medals which they distribute at their coronations and at the celebrations of their victories! Which of these things survive? None! The only thing that survives is writing — the writing we do. Stone crumbles, pictures fade — even the most carefully preserved ones have not lasted five hundred years — the marble turns yellow, it rots, it breaks. Even granite crumbles. Again I say, and I will say it a thousand times! we are the only ones in the world who can save kings and their reigns from oblivion. Their glory, their immortality, is in our hands, and ours alone: in our hands, our ink, our pens. Without Virgil, Horace, Livy, Ovid, who would know Augustus from all the other Augustuses, nephew to Cæsar though he was, emperor though he may have been? Without the unsuccessful little lawyer named Suetonius, no one would know the three Cæsars from the rest of the dozen whose lives he wanted so much to write. Without Tacitus, one could not distinguish the Romans of his time from the German barbarians. Without Shakespeare the Elizabethan period would practically disappear from English history. Without Boileau, without Racine, without Corneille, without Pascal, without la Bruyère, without Molière, Louis XIV, reduced to his mistresses and his perukes, becomes no more than a coxcomb wearing a crown, who puts me in mind of tavern brawls. Without us, Philippe I would be a name less well-known than Philippe the restaurant-keeper, of the Rue Montorgueil, or Philippe the conjurer. For the sake of Louis-Philippe I, I hope it will be said that in the time of Victor Hugo, of Lamartine, of Beranger, there was a king by the name of Louis-Philippe I."

Balzac's anger lost itself in a third or fourth pear, which he opened with his red mouth, very much as a bomb dives into and shatters a mass of clay.

After this final explosion we rose and went onto the terrace for coffee, where we breathed the bright, sweet air of a lovely day.

We talked for another hour over our cups — a delightful and serious hour, during which Hugo and Balzac discussed first of all, the French Academy, in which there was, just then, a vacancy. Hugo would not promise much, and Balzac was pessimistic also. He was not in favor — has he ever been? — under the cupola of the Palais Mazarin. The author of *Orientales*, who had just published *Les Rayons et Les Ombres*, then brought up the subject of his forthcoming political candidacy. It was now Balzac's turn to express politely his doubts as to the success of this venture, so thoroughly justified by the tremendous ability of the poet, but so uncertain considering the extreme commercialism of the period, and the people on whom the election depended. Balzac did not fail, however, to enlist his pen in the service of politics; he did not hesitate to employ his great genius in behalf of the men and the events of his time. He supported them vigorously, as can be seen by examining a contribution of his to the *Revue Parisienne* of July 25, 1840:

"Monsieur Hugo is one of the most brilliant men of our day. In practical matters he shows that good judgment, that accuracy, which is supposed to be lacking in writers, but which is thought to be found in the simpletons listed on ballots. As though men accustomed to handling ideas could not have a knowledge of facts! Those who are capable of the greatest things are capable of the smallest. For sixty years M. d'Aranda found Fielding more difficult than the duties of an Ambassador. 'The affairs of state settle themselves as best they can,' he said, 'but the poet must solve his own problems in a way that will satisfy everyone.' M. Hugo, as well as M. de Lamartine, will someday revenge the insults eternally hurled at literature by the *bourgeoisie*. *If he were to enter politics, rest assured that he would take with him the most extraordinary ability.* His adaptability is unlimited, his finesse is as great as his genius, and in contrast to our professional statesmen, he is possessed of nobility and dignity. As for his elocution, it is marvelous. He will be the most popular speaker imaginable, and his mind will be the keenest. You forget, perhaps, that his two former booksellers are now eligible; that he himself was not eligible yesterday, but is today. In what an admirable time we are living! The author of *Contrat Social* will not be elected; perhaps he will be haled into police-court."

The sun dropped below the horizon. Victor Hugo spoke of returning to Paris. As I was going there also, I suggested that we make the trip together. We said farewell to *Les Jardies*. Slowly the three of us made our way to Sèvres, where Hugo and I climbed onto a stage-coach that was swifter than lightning, and which eventually set us down on the Rue de Rivoli. Balzac insisted positively on accompanying us as far as Sèvres, in spite of the amount of work lying unfinished on his table—including two or three articles for the *Revue Parisienne*, his literary passion at the time. He put on a colorless old vest of Prussian velvet; tied, by way of a cravat, a piece of old red foulard around his neck, and we set off.

But Balzac did not let Hugo get away until he had acted as ambassador for a young Russian lord, who was wild to meet Hugo, and shake hands with him before going back to the snow and the steppes of his native country. Hugo granted very graciously the request of the young foreigner; whereupon Balzac, on his own behalf and on behalf of the Russian, invited us to dine the following Thursday at the Rocher de Cancale. This request was also favorably received. The dinner, or rather the supper, proved very interesting, and I should be glad to recount its salient details had it not occurred so far from *Les Jardies*. As it is, I shall leave that story for my Memoirs.

JEAN-GASPARD DEBURAU

1796-1846

By JULES JANIN¹ (1804-1874)



I

Preamble.—Often I regret those good days in the theatre when, from every side, young fledgling talents would present themselves before criticism for counsel and encouragement. Those were splendid hours for both the fledgling talents and for criticism. Hand in hand they marched towards a single goal, and if disputes arose along the way, which frequently occurred, even their disputes turned to the profit of art. Thus might Talma and Geoffroy achieve a European reputation on the same day.

Decadence of Art. But today all, all is changed in dramatic art. You might possess the crutch of Asmodeus and attend every theatre in Paris, clear-sighted as an old devil, and not find one reputation to contend for, not one new name to make, not one new talent to reveal. The modern actor escapes both criticism and reproach. The school of Cartigny has produced still less material than the *Conservatoire*, if that be possible. The theatre has been delivered up to the great professionals, for whom an artist's equipment consists wholly of his enthusiasm. Of all their tribe these are the most detestable, for a lifetime of enthusiasm profits a man less than a single week of meditation and honest labour in his art. So true is this that our dramatists have abandoned the search for actors to interpret their plays, they have come to depend for success upon themselves and themselves alone. And they are right in doing so. Criticism, for its part, has been obliged to dispense with the actors likewise, having no longer advice or praise or reproach to give them. Whereby they are both the losers.

The Rope-Dancers. There are, however, occasional exceptions to this journalist's rule of silence towards the actor. Something for our ardour we critics needs must have, who pretend to the title of artist in our own right. At the *Théâtre-Français* there is nothing, so we betake ourselves elsewhere, no matter whither, even, for example, to the Theatres of the Boulevards. And it was in one of these obscure playhouses, the smallest,

¹ Translated, for the first time into English, especially for this collection, by Winifred Katzin.

The title of the original French is *Deburau. Histoire du Théâtre à quatre sous, pour faire suite à l'histoire du Théâtre français*, Paris, 1832.

the most villainous-odoured of them all, by the light of four wretched candles and in the most putrid atmosphere conceivable, next door to a menagerie whose howls continued throughout the singing, that we discovered, and showered our ravished applause upon, the Great Actor, nay, the Great Clown, Deburau.

II

MORE than once I have spoken of Deburau with unfeigned sincerity, yet several gentlemen of enquiring disposition have solemnly demanded of me formal explanation in the matter, refusing to accept my mere word upon the merit of an actor of whom they have never heard, and whom it is unlikely they will ever see, so greatly do their wives and daughters fear the smell of soot and of coatless, shirt-sleeved audiences, so mightily are these ladies all partial to the Eau-de-Cologne of Maria Farina. There is no denying that the lovers of Eau-de-Cologne are exceedingly numerous today.

In order, therefore, to satisfy these many exigencies, and in some hope of rebuffing the questions which persecute me without mercy apropos of my Great Artist, I have informed myself meticulously upon him. I have, in short, been to a true biographer's pains over our clown so that the full glory of this discovery and all the rights thereto accruing may be counted to me when the time comes.

His Birth. The greatest actor of our time, Jean-Gaspard Deburau, was born at Newkolin in Bohemia on the 31st of July, 1796. Deburau is our last and most precious gift from vagabond Bohemia, that empire which sailed across the Middle Ages with its freight of gay and devil-may-care actors and spirited and sightly girls. That world of Bohemia, laughing on while the rest of Europe was drenched in tears, surviving in amity while cities streamed with the blood of civil war; that world of joy and licence and greasy food and lascivious songs and pleasure unconfined, enduring down all those devout and fervent monkish centuries dominated by the spirit of King Louis XI and personified in him! That world of Bohemia, excommunicated ages before Luther, but going forth with laughter, severed from the Church without fuss or fury, on a mere point of etiquette! That precarious world, overrunning the earth, with purple-smear'd faces, drawn along in Thespis' ancient cart and brought to a standstill every now and then as civilization obstructs its way on every side! From this world Deburau has come to us. From very far, is it not? And from very near, too.

His Father Comes Into a Legacy. He was born a poor soldier's son, in the midst of an army encamped. His earliest years were spent under the walls of Warsaw, and that is why, since the Polish insurrection and the death of those brave phalanxes which gave Poland so gloriously the victory, Deburau, the Bohemian, insists boldly that he is a Pole. Such is the artist's

vanity! However, Deburau had hardly reached his seventh year and was growing up without a care for the future, when his father learnt that he had fallen heir to a legacy in France. By what route that legacy, from the very heart of France, came to the soldier Deburau at Newkolin in Bohemia, is one of those inexplicable things which history errs greatly in ignoring. Behold, then, this father of a family, at the news of the unforeseen bequest, setting out forthwith to take possession of his far off inheritance. The family was poor, the road long; but hope was high. The father devised an altogether Bohemian means of beguiling the tedium of the way and turning it to profit. The quicker to reach his estates, he turned his children without more ado into street-performers. He had two pretty daughters. They walked the wire rope and the crowd gathered to watch them with their swarthy faces and bright black eyes as they stepped intrepidly on light, diminutive feet, or grasped the heavy weights gracefully with their thin but shapely hands. As a prelude to the performance of these two young persons, Deburau's two brothers did their turns, for this family of five boasted five artists, not counting the father and mother. Alone our Deburau brought neither natural gifts nor willingness to the enterprise. He had little suppleness in his limbs and, in his own naïve words, still less desire in his heart to make his way through life on his two hands.

His First Appearances. Success came lagging for my Hero. More than once he was hissed on the public square while his brothers and sisters were wildly applauded. More than once the chair he bore upon his clenched teeth betrayed the laws of equilibrium and came crashing down upon his face. More than once the great Migration almost cost him his life, and at those moments you would have thought pity to see him, all bleeding and undone, the poor tumbler, receiving with drooping head, chastisement at his father's hands.

His Early Sufferings. Ah, what a life of hardship and misery! How many the humiliations heaped and piled upon one head! How many the strange disparities between himself and his brethren, despite their common blood! For them the shining spangles, the scarves of silk, the embroidered slippers, the dazzling tights! For him the threadbare rags, the ancient felt, the broken sandals. For them, the admiration of the crowd by day, and at night the rasher of bacon, the steaming cabbage, the foaming beer, the fresh pallet, all of life's glories, all its joys; for him the smirk of contempt, the unmitigated bread and water, and the last place in the barn, next the door, far, far from the hole through which the warm, sweet airs of the cow sheds came comfortingly. Such, for him, condemned and unsuspected genius, was the journey through the nations. His father, seeing him as inept on the tight rope as upon the slack wire, realized that he would never be an acrobat, so he made a clown of him; not the grave and quiet clown we see today, but a laughing, drunk-ruddy, tumbling, capering clown, a vulgar clown, an alley clown. In this capacity, which I will call

indeed humiliating, the task allotted Debureau by his father was that of throwing into relief the skill and graces of his brothers and sisters. He stood between them and the crowd, the conflict without which the Drama ceases to be, the indispensable shadow in the picture. They light as air, he heavy as lead; they tossing the audience neat flatteries and witticisms, he coarse and stupid buffooneries. He it was who received those blows and sempiternal kicks in the rear at which our old Universe has roared with laughter since Adam. Ah, poor great man! How long, how weary he must have found the way from Bohemia to his father's distant patrimony!

Amiens. At last they came to it, that estate so long looked forward to, the whole family crowned with laurels, excepting only Debureau, who came hatless and with bramble-torn feet. Lo, the Promised Land at last! Lo, Amiens, the city of succulent pastry, the epicure's city of cities, Amiens wherein also lie the acres of the Deboraus. Now he can take his rest, the tired last-born of the family. Now, on the threshold of the paternal Manor, he can put off his rags and his borrowed quips and his poor soul's laughter, this sad, laborious clown! Look how he turns his head from side to side for a glimpse of the lands for which he has paid with so many a dolorous guffaw. But alas and alack-a-day, O poor, poor artists! Arrived at their property, they find a hovel instead of the palace they had come for, neither fertile harvest fields nor rich farm-yards, but only a half-acre of ground all overgrown with thorn bushes. This is what they have travelled so far to find, this pitiable, destitute ruin of a place. The cruel disappointment! Most cruel of all for you, O my poor clown, my ragged Benjamin! Now you must laugh again all day if you would have your crust to eat at night.

The Departure from Amiens. That is the story of the legacy. The hovel was sold and the proceeds soon eaten. Then, after a few days' halt, departure. Farewell Amiens, farewell France, so insensitive in those days to Art. The family takes the road again, father, mother, girls, boys and Debureau, already lame and pale at the thought of that road to travel again, brings up the rear. At this point we must record a gentleness evident in Debureau père. Do what he may, there are signs by which a man will inevitably betray his fatherhood, be his discipline never so stern. Thus our father, one very cold morning, perceiving his children's feet all caloused and red, purchased a horse for the sum of eighteen francs for the conveyance of his effects and family. A regular Descamps horse it was, an acrobat's horse, gaunt, tailless, droop-headed, flat-hoofed. The transfer accomplished, the honest steed received his burden, which consisted of two baskets. In these baskets the father placed the whole family, all of them in a heap. There they sat, off the road, happy and in comfort. In such comfort as they had never known before, more particularly Gaspard, Gaspard crouching in the shelter of the stage ladders. In this wise they

made their entrance into the cities of Europe. So far so good. But often it happened — in spite of their equipage, if not on account of it — that they could obtain lodging only for the horse. On those occasions they would put him up for the night while the family remained outside in the open, and slept in his baskets. The father stood vigil over his children. In those hours two men alone were keeping watch in Europe, Napoleon and Papa Debureau!

Eulogy on his Father. The good man! By that horse at eighteen francs and those long winter watches under the cold and glittering stars, you redeem many a kick with which in your zeal you may have assaulted your family! And your family forgives you! Posterity reinstates your memory. May your shade in its tomb rejoice!

Death of the Horse. One day the eighteen-franc horse died of starvation. Luckless, noble charger, he had fought at Austerlitz! Upon the proceeds of his hide the whole troupe breakfasted; then, the skies having become more clement and the air more balmy as they neared the Orient each member of the troupe got upon his feet and the migration continued.

III

ONWARD, dancing, they went, as far as Constantinople, traversing the entire length of the Bosphorus from Thrace, and all upon a tight rope. How strange and perilous a pilgrimage for a family obliged to make itself so small that it can slip out unscathed from between two wars. Among other rapturous experiences at Constantinople, they had the honour of performing at the Sultan's palace. That is a chapter of great beauty in their chronicle, but I shall not write it because of the difficulty of so doing. I shall merely attempt a sketch of it.

The Harem. That day the spangles on their tights shone with unwonted brilliance; the tunics had been washed the day before; the tight-rope dancers had been rehearsed in the morning and their suppleness left nothing to be desired. The whole family had dined. Even Debureau, even Debureau had dined! Then, obedient to the behest they had received the day before, they turned their steps towards the palace of the Mighty One.

They crossed the inner court. A deaf-mute introduced them into a vast hall of marble and gold. This hall was divided in two by a silken curtain drawn across the centre. Not a soul was to be seen, not a sound to be heard in the hall. Silence and desolation lay upon it as upon the *Théâtre-Français* during a play by M. Bonjour. The deaf-mute gestured to our artists to play before that unresponsive curtain. They could only obey. In silence they made their preparations, unrolling their street mats upon the Persian carpets of the harem, chalking their feet with the chalk of their art as other artists put on their faces the grease-paint of theirs. They began. They bent, they revolved, they bore one another aloft, they twisted and

turned in all directions. The curtain betrayed no movement behind it. The glacial silence did not freeze the troupe of Deburaus.

The Odaliskues. They were a long time at their balancing tricks. Debureau threw himself on his back while his elder brother, with a crow-bar heavy enough to crack his skull ten times over, knocked a coin off his nose. Nobody has ever before thought to describe this horrible and fantastic business. His nose set free, Debureau rose while his other brother seized a ladder and raised it in both hands. That quivering stair was Debureau's to mount. He climbed from rung to rung; he reached the top and there stood — at the pinnacle of his Art. And there, O miracle! O recompense, which for the artist arrives ever when least expected! Down over the curtain plunged the gaze of our Hero, poised on the topmost rung of the ladder! What did he there, our great Pagliaccio, when behind that curtain he beheld the silent audience, immobile, semi-nude, reclining one against the other, arrayed in suave cashmeres covered with shining white pearls, exhaling the perfumes of amber and attar of roses, he, the infinitesimal, he the earthworm, his father's buffoon, saw with his eyes the odaliskues of the seraglio, the sacred spouses of Majesty, the terrible Houris, one glance of whose eyes strikes dead the beholder!

Yea, from the top of his ladder he saw them all, those women hidden from all men's eyes; from above down he regarded them, those women whom the Sultan himself looks upon from below up. With impunity he beheld them, those women before whose shrouded palanquin the Faithful bow their heads in passing. And he would be looking at them still had not his brother who sustained the ladder grown tired of sustaining it. This was the first stroke of happy chance for Debureau, and it awoke in him for the first time a belief that he might perchance be a man of the same clay as his brothers and sisters. But the hour of immortality and glory had not yet struck for him.

Migrations. From Constantinople they went to Germany, still on the rope and wire, Debureau still having more money on his nose than in his pocket, Debureau still at the top of the ladder. And sometimes Queens and Emperors were at his feet, and Princesses and Grand-Dukes, and Barons in crowds; but odaliskues nevermore. Nevermore a group of odaliskues reclining behind a secret silken curtain!

Thus, up to the age of fifteen, he was a traveller and a roamer over the earth, this obscure, timid Actor, starving, laughing, belaboured, swallowing back his tears, being witty at the expense of his wits, his constitution and his heart. From stage to stage, from Emperor to Emperor, the family at last reached that Imperial Paris whither all superior beings, crowned or uncrowned, found their way in those days, impelled by the Destiny of Bonaparte, all the vagabond royalties running, as Debureau had run, after a legacy which ever receded. At Paris the father and captain of the family established himself in a yard in the rue Saint-Maur, doubtless lamenting

the Cour des Miracles! The entertainment was more or less orthodox. The Rope-dance was its foundation much as, fifteen years ago, an opera by M. Jouy was the corner-stone of the *Théâtre de l'Opéra*.

The Rope-Dance. In those days (they were the good old days for the theatres and for the spectators), the public was not so hard to amuse as it is now. Time was when a comedy by M. Andrieux was an event. Time was when theatres knew nothing of expensive sets. With the construction of a trap-door, a forest and a palace (exterior), the public was considered to have been very well treated indeed. A thirty-sous fireworks display to bring down the curtain represented a sacrifice for which the pit remained grateful for three months. Neither were theatres of those days so extravagant with that commodity known as "supers." The "super" was costly; he was employed with economy therefore. A brigade of five bandits including the chief, with two gendarmes to apprehend them, and all the newspapers cried out prodigality! And so it was with the artists' salaries; glory as much as they could carry, money as little as they would take. Glory — that is the true currency for artists!

The Grande Marche Militaire. This is the key to the great success of Deburau père and his family. True, they were only acrobats, but they were marvels on the tight rope and at that time the tight rope was the Academy for a dancer. The music was of the noisiest; Deburau's clarinet put any drum to shame. After the tight rope came the slack wire, and on the rope and wire they performed the most difficult tricks. It required no mean genius to organize and vary that repertory. One day the *Grande Marche Militaire* would defile before you, another time the company would rise in the *Pyramide d'Egypte*, a souvenir of their travels in the Orient. The following is a description of the *Grande Marche Militaire*: Three men dressed as warriors, waving the tricolour in their hands, took the rope at the charge. The *Pyramide d'Egypte*: Two parallel ropes along each of which stepped one of the acrobats, supporting on their necks a forked rod which joined them together. Two other artists stood upon this rod, joined likewise. And upon the second fork stood Deburau. A moving structure raised upon a foundation of shivering wire! Artists irrevocably joined together, each balance depending upon three other balances! Luckless Deburau trembling like the yellow leaf of autumn upon the dried-up branch; Restrain your laughter, gentlemen, those were the palmy days of Art! Those audiences knew the quivering eagerness of authentic passion; those artists held their noisy crowds in ravished attention. No modern drama will ever interest its audience as did the *Grande Marche Militaire* and the *Pyramide d'Egypte*, those immense, heroic exploits of Deburau's young days.

Monsieur and Madame Godot. To the history of the *Pyramide d'Egypte* belongs a sad story. One day, Monsieur and Madame Godot, the First Tight-Rope Dancers of Europe, though at that time a little on the wane, became drunk but by accident, oh quite, quite by accident! Now, Monsieur

and Madame Godot were the base of the Pyramid, they supported the first forked rod. It was, therefore, important that Monsieur and Madame Godot remain in full possession of their faculties, at least until seven o'clock in the evening. Now, swaying unsteadily, Monsieur and Madame Godot extended their rod and their necks towards the next dancers, and the second tier placed themselves upon the rod thus offered. So far, so good. It was then Deburau's turn to mount. Up he went, boldly up, the great man, fasting as usual. He had no wine to carry and little dreamed what wine was carrying him. All of a sudden, Monsieur Godot began to tremble, Madame Godot began to tremble; Monsieur leaned towards Madame, Madame towards Monsieur; the Pyramid staggered, tottered, fell, fell to the ground, Deburau first, Deburau all but dashed to pieces. And laugh! The audience burst into roars, into gales of laughter! They were like to bring the house about their ears. Our poor artist, bruised and broken, gazed at the pit with tears in his eyes, and the pit went off into louder roars than before. "Ingrate Public! ", as Baron used to say.

Titles. However, despite his clarinet and his Pyramid, despite the bumps on his forehead, despite every effort, glory was no more for Deburau in the courtyard of the rue Saint-Maur than anywhere else in Europe. All the glory, all the success, all the titbits at meals still fell to the share of his brothers and sisters. And what was more, each one of them had attained to a distinct and separate personality for the crowd, each had his name, or hers, billed at the Theatre, and not the name only but the title as well; the title, that supreme halo of glory, accorded by public enthusiasm. The name of the eldest brother was Nieumensek, and the crowd had given him the well-earned name of King of the Carpet; the second bore the simple name of Etienne, the Accomplished Tumbler. He is now a groom in Belgium, in charge of sixty horses and I know not how many under-grooms. Nothing could equal the audience's enthusiasm for the elder of the sisters whom they called The Beautiful Hungarian; and as for Dorothy, the younger, the pearl of the Deburau family, her successes were not limited to the courtyard of the Rue Saint-Maur; she became a Polish Countess when later on she married Lieutenant-Colonel Dobrowski.

IV

DEBURAU alone, in the midst of this resplendent family, without a title, without even a name, was still the most obscure, the most disregarded and the most unhappy artist in all the Empire of France.

And yet, even in his profoundest abasement, he one day received an unmistakable revelation of the high fortune awaiting him. The great Napoleon who divined so many things — Austerlitz, Jena, the Five Codes — very nearly divined Deburau too. Thanks to its triumphs, the Deburau family had obtained the concession for open-air performances on public holidays;

thus, in its fashion, serving the government almost as actively as an Imperial censor. One day, one victory day it was (often there were as many as thirty of these in one month), the Emperor was on his way to Saint-Cloud alone, and from within his carriage he chanced to espy a poor clown going the same way, trudging along, covered with sweat, evidently in a great hurry. It amused the Emperor, who might at will have invited into his carriage a gentleman of the Old Régime or a gentleman of the New Régime, to invite instead a common clown, a clown off the high road, to drive with him. No sooner conceived than accomplished. All at once the Imperial carriage pulls up beside the clown and stops; the door opens, Deburau climbs in, he talks with the Emperor face to face, and almost as fearfully as though he were talking with His Majesty his great brother Nieumensek, King of the Carpet. What they talked of, the Emperor and our clown, you no doubt guess; they talked of the Art of the Drama. Napoleon, universal genius! He would talk war to the soldier, science to the scholar, poetry to the poet; to each, of his art, to each, of his glory; this he did, he who was at the level of all glory! With the Clown Deburau he talked theatre, therefore.

And this so mighty Emperor had given everything to France except peace and quietness and one good tragedy.

Dissertation. You remember all those pitiful tragedies the Empire produced? The cheek flushes with shame merely to think of them. The Emperor, powerless against so dire a scourge and knowing no remedy for it, admitted the poverty of his Kingdom in this regard as he admitted all the others, confusedly and without conviction—in a whisper even. He sought, therefore, the opinion of his clown upon the state of the modern theatre and the merit of Oriental, Venetian, English, German and Italian tragedy. He desired to hear his judgment upon the translations of Shakespeare, Schiller, Kotzebue, blatant imitations of the theatre of the Seventeenth Century, enervated plagiarisms devoid of style and colour, which Talma and Mademoiselle Georges animated as best they might by their sheer beauty and genius. The state of tragedy under the Empire worried the Emperor confusedly, as a stain upon his velvet mantle would have worried him on a day when he was to receive kings in audience. So he must have the opinion of this rustic clown upon the great poets living under his reign. At first the rustic clown inclined to hesitate, but the Emperor was insistent. And Deburau made him the following memorable answer, embracing and admirably summing up the entire literature of the Empire:

“Sire, these gentlemen would have been far greater poets if, instead of writing tragedies, they had been satisfied to write pantomimes instead.” a whole course in literature lies in these words.

The Performing Dogs. At the epoch of which I speak, dramatic art was nevertheless widely professed and widely patronized. Seats at the

Académie Française were in prodigious demand. The Emperor often went to the play. He would remain there for hours together, listening to the great Corneille. It was a time of tremendous rivalries among actresses and actors; there were the factions of the Greens and the Blues, as in the Roman Circus of yore; there were duels as in the time of old Gluck, the protégé of Queen Marie-Antoinette. If not the drama, the show at least was everywhere. There was even a house where trained dogs performed, real live dogs in the costumes of the XVIIIth Century. I wonder why. Black-muzzled Marquises, Duchesses with white paws, tawny Musketeers with hind quarters insolently lifted. Deburau, weary of following in his father's train, beaten so much and eating so little, now joined in self-defence the Theatre of Performing Dogs, himself to perform the tumbling pantomime. This Theatre of Performing Dogs is today the Theatre of the Tight-Rope Dancers which plays Vaudeville as well. So do all things in this world descend; Vaudeville is everywhere, Performing Dogs are nowhere to be found.

Chronology. Most curious would be the history of that Theatre of Performing Dogs, if it ever could be written. The entire course of the progress of art, as set forth by philosophers of all ages, would be found epitomized in the history of that little Theatre, so despised, so inglorious, and withal so rich! The destiny of Deburau and the destiny of the Theatre of the Tight-Rope Dancers are forever one; he and the Theatre grew up together and simultaneously, and together attained to celebrity, glory and success. They are as popular one as the other and one through the other. Take Deburau from his theatre and it instantly crumbles to the level of the *Théâtre-Français*. Take his Theatre from Deburau, its dilapidation, its evil-smelling candles, its pit in shirt-sleeves and labourers' caps, and in the same moment Deburau becomes the equal of a provincial Elleviou. They will die on the same day, actor and theatre. But how great is their pride in each other! How perfect their accord! How complete their mutual love and understanding! And how many, many happy days Deburau has known in his Theatre!

Topography. When the Theatre of the Tight-Rope Dancers was still only the Theatre of Performing Dogs, Deburau was still only his father's clown. You went down ten stairs into the hall; it was like entering a cellar. At the bottom of the stairs you were confronted by two rows of boxes. The stage was extremely narrow. Huge cushions adorned it. After the usual Symphony, the curtain rose and the show began. You saw Monsieur and Madame Denis appear, dressed in the height of style of the Louis XV period, powder and patches, sequins, velvet breeches, silk stockings, embroidered cuffs, lace cravat, ruffles, with all the paraphernalia of a fashionable Marquis, all the airs of a person of consequence. Down to the elegant gait and insolent flourishes, nothing was lacking! Following the noble Lord who must, at the very least, be a familiar of Richelieu, came

Carlin, his valet, Carlin, dressed as a jockey, carrying Monsieur's umbrella and Madame's muff — or her canary, as the case might be. The next to appear was the watchman, armed and wearing his hair in a pigtail; the watchman arrested a deserter. Court-martial followed hard on the heels of the arrest; the deserter stood trial and was condemned to death. In the last act, he was slowly led to the Préau, to the accompaniment of doleful music. Arrived at the Préau, he was released — then, fire! A terrific volley of cartridges, and the victim fell as bravely as any hero of the old army condemned by the Upper Chamber.

Elegy. Those were the Drama's good old days! There was a quick, animated, impassioned Drama that went straight to the point with no idle words, no soliloquies, no hesitation, above all, with no couplets and neither the music of Vaudeville nor of Comic Opera! Sentimental Drama, Bourgeois Drama, Society Drama; Romance, History, Philosophy, Politics, Love, all came within the power of the Performing Dogs. Poor actors, great actors, they played Marivaux and Corneille without knowing they were doing it! They exploited every nuance of passion in the great candour of their genius! They were the predecessors of the melodrama of the Boulevards. Yes, the Performing Dogs were the true fathers of melodrama! Melodrama belongs to them as Greek roots belong to Port-Royal. They awoke the genius of M. de Pixérécourt even as the apple falling from the tree awoke the genius of Newton! All honour to the Performing Dogs! All honour to Newton's apple!

Analysis. You should have seen them in their heyday, those intrepid artists! The military genius of the Empire fired them with all its flames. They rushed to the attack like the warriors of the Pyramids. You saw the city beleaguered, the ramparts defended. Dogs, heroes rather, stood upon those ramparts; other heroes brought battering-rams, set up ladders; from victor and vanquished, from besieger and besieged came shouts of glory, came plaintive cries of pain; there lay the dying, there the dead! It fairly rained down blood. The city was taken by storm and capitulated at last; trumpets resounded, the conquering Monarch reviewed his troops amid the acclamations of the audience.

Regrets. Alas! Alas for this spectacle, so frequented, so celebrated, alas for those brave poodles, those haughty bulldogs, those clever pugs, those elegant greyhounds, those great Newfoundlands, that whole dramatic world that so delighted city and provinces alike, little by little it has vanished quite away and we know it no more. Behold in this the inconstancy of the Theatre! Each new century witnesses the rise of a new monstrosity. The Brethren of the Passion give place to the profane actors of Corneille; after Corneille and politics, Racine and Love; then Voltaire and Liberty, Crébillon and blood, De Belloi and *Les Français*; then the Theatre of the Fair; then Beaumarchais and the Revolution of '89, the great, the true, the one sincere Revolution of all! Then M. Ducis, M. Jouy, M.

Etienne and the Performing Dogs whose glory overwhelms all other glories; then upon the wreck of the Performing Dogs, themselves enthroned upon the wreck of so many predecessors, there arrives another claimant for a place beside Picard and M. Scribe, dethroned sovereigns too. Heedless of the past and future, cool-headed as are all conquerors conscious of their strength, it is he, the Clown, the Mute, the Profound, the Flour-faced Deburau!

So much for your theatrical glory! Go on, then, pursue the doctor's ephemeral renown, which, like the glory of the violinist, leaves no trace behind it, not a breath, not a gesture, not a tone of the voice, nothing to recall what once you were! What though your name be Molé, d'Azincourt, Contat, Talma! Great dead actors, you are all gone, and the indifferent, brief-memoried crowd prefers a thousand times the living Deburau!

V

WHEN the Theatre of Performing Dogs had disappeared to make way for the Theatre of the Tight-Rope Dancers as it exists today, the rope-dancing itself soon gave way to an innovation hitherto unheard of, and which the greatest rhetoricians, from Aristotle to Despréaux, were no doubt far from foreseeing. I refer to the Acrobatic Pantomime which was, so to speak, the germ of that other still more significant innovation called the Dialogue-pantomime, stupendous and glorious achievements both to stand to the credit of a single century. Yet this century has produced besides, stroke upon stroke in a veritable torrent, the Epistles, the Satires, the Discourses, the Tragedies and the Burlesque Poems of Monsieur Viennet! Here follow a few details concerning the Acrobatic Pantomime, the invention of which is partly the work of our Great Artist.

Definition. The Earliest Acrobatic Pantomime: The Acrobatic Pantomime may be thus described: A slight plot combined with acrobatic feats. It marks the ultimate progress of a company of acrobats who, obedient to the popular whim, consent to become actors, but on condition that they still retain their character as acrobats. This is the history of prose writers who desired to write blank verse. The earliest Acrobatic Pantomime, so far as I have been able to trace it, is this:

Harlequin enters, lamenting over the theatre. When he has done this long enough, he turns three somersaults. Cassandra then appears and replies to Harlequin. Having answered, Cassandra then executes a *saut de sourd*, accompanied by a *saut de carpe*. Next arrives the Idiot Lover, a droll fellow and greatly beloved, and a coward into the bargain. He holds a bouquet of flowers at his side, as you saw him in *The Talking Picture*. The Lover does a *saut de poltron* and a *saut périlleux* backwards. Last comes Deburau, walking on his hands. Deburau does a *saut d'ivrogne*. At the conclusion of the piece, they all leave as they entered, this one on his

hands, the other on his feet, and that is all. This acrobatic pantomime, these astonishing feats intermingled with drama had a huge success.

The Battles. It was about this time that the terrific Battles with sabre and axe came into vogue. Next to the Performing Dogs, the Terrific Battle must stand as the principal cause of Melodrama in France. The earliest piece of this type was called *The Siege of the Castle*. No modern drama ever boasted a comparable success. The curtain rose upon the castle; the castle was guarded above by two soldiers and below by two soldiers. Above and below, one of the soldiers was a traitor and the other loyal; the one desired to surrender the castle, the other meant to defend it. There was fighting above and fighting below; they fought like true Performing Dogs. In the end, the traitor above and the traitor below met their death and the castle was saved. This was the whole of the performance, and no romantic drama or charity performance ever attracted such a concourse of people.

By an odd turn of fortune (it being clearly the desire of Fate that our Hero's biography be complete), we unearthed a play-bill of the kind in use at that time. It is a highly curious piece of eloquence and well worth perpetuating:

PLAY BILL

GRAND THEATRE OF TIGHT-ROPE DANCERS

Authorized by the authorities and by special permission.

TODAY, A Special Performance. A brilliant performance will be presented of the

SIEGE OF THE CASTLE

PANTOMIME, military and with fire-works illuminations, new scenery representing a MOUNTAIN; CHANGES ON THE STAGE, TRAVESTIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS; NEW COSTUMES with a SABRE FIGHT WITH FOUR COMBATANTS; MARCHES, BANDS, MILITARY EVOLUTIONS AND EXPLOSION AT THE FINAL TABLEAU.

One performance will take place at 3 o'clock, one at 5, one at 7, one at 8, and one at 9 o'clock.

Come in, Gentlemen, this is not to be missed!

The Harlequins. After the pyrotechnics and the military pieces, and when they had fought long enough with sabre and ax, there was a truce to these battles in the Theatre of the Tight-Rope Dancers. Even Napoleon allowed himself a truce occasionally! Like the Emperor, it paused, out of breath, and turned for a moment to gentler sentiments. It realized that war, splendid though it might be, should not lead to a neglect of moral issues, even at the Theatre of Tight-Rope Dancers. Therefore they gave

moral plays at this Theatre, while the hall was still full of the smoke from the explosions. *The Barbarous Father*, or *Harlequin at the Grave*, *The Dog Harlequin*, the *Harlequin Statue*, Harlequin was put into all of them. Not even Monsieur de Florian himself had committed worse abuse of Harlequin than did the Tight-Rope Dancers. Harlequin was for them what the family of the Atrides was to the Greek, Roman and French poets — he was the inexhaustible Hero. Charles Nodier undertook to write a life of him which he did not live to finish, and he bequeathed it to Cruickshank and to our own Charlet, neither of whom will finish it. Charlet is too much occupied with his history of the Grand Army, part of which beautiful gift we have already received. Besides, Charlet though he be, he knows that no man should undertake a task beyond his powers. That I should be the one to talk this way, I the infinitesimal, who dare undertake to write the life of Deburau!

The Harlequin dramas achieved the sound establishment of the Theatre. It soon had an enormous clientele of subscribers at four sous. Thanks to these lessons in simple morality, the Youth of France was enabled to prepare itself for the lessons in higher morality which M. Marty was to give them later on. The Theatre gave six performances daily, holidays excepted. Nine on Sundays. Deburau can remember having played twenty-six times in three days at New Year's. What an example of unconquerable zeal and self-denial for Madame Malibran to study — the ingrate! She has robbed us of hearing her all this winter. But she will pay no attention to it.

The Beards. The pains taken by the Theatre of Tight-Rope Dancers to vary their programs would also serve as an excellent example to the theatres of Paris which take great pride to themselves if they put on a new vaudeville every ten days. Not only does the Theatre of Tight-Rope Dancers vary its plays from one moment to another; it even changes its heroes when the old ones are worn out. Thus after Harlequin, when no more can possibly be done with him, an entirely new character will appear, not a whit less interesting than he — a character of many aspects, variable, long, short, fat, coxcombed, pepper-and-salt, that grows longer and longer, or curls, at will, and can at will be put out like a candle — this character, this quite new hero, is the beard. There were beards of every colour at the Tight-Rope Dancers'. In the beginning was Bluebeard, the classic; then Greybeard, Blackbeard, Whitebeard. The Beards lasted as long as Harlequin. Then a day came when, discarding all these specialties which had begun to pall somewhat, the Theatre conceived the production of the great fairy-piece entitled *Arimane*, which revealed to it at last its true and inevitable future.

At that time (Deburau had not yet emerged from his obscurity) there lived, or rather reigned, at the Tight-Rope Dancers' a man who, diverse fortune to the contrary, is still the only actor who has ever understood the drama of our day, the only one who knows how to act it, the only one made for it and for whom it is made. By these qualities you have all recog-

nized Frederick Lemaître, Frederick, my radiant actor, handsome, eloquent, impassioned, fiery, extravagant, charming; Frederick whom we have seen in rags, in the *bonnet-rouge*, in the turban of Othello, in the garments of Richard d'Arlington; Frederick, which is to say *The Gambler*, *Mephistopheles*, *The Marshal D'Ancre*, the whole dramatic work of Victor Hugo, of Vigny, of Dumas, nay of M. Casimir Delavigne himself, for whom Frederick is quite indispensable. Well, it was at the Tight-Rope Dancers' that Frederick Lemaître began. To him we owed the triumph of *Arimane*, and that four-sous audience, that audience of slum-dwellers who can judge things not only keenly but almost always rightly too, that clever and omnipotent audience discovered the genius of Frederick. His first appearance had been at Madame Rose's in some admirable *Parades*, at a time when the *Parade* was still held in honour, and Bobèche occupied the place of the Café Tortoni. At the Tight-Rope Dancers' he played the *rôle* of *Arimane*. We have not forgotten the terror he inspired as he entered with a wooden lance and a shield made out of cardboard. Later he played the *False Hermit*! And with every new *rôle*, he brought nearer and nearer to perfection that shrewdness and animation in the portrayal of character which have stood him so magnificently in his stead in his later career. His connection with the Tight-Rope Dancers lasted four years, four years of anonymous glory and true happiness. But one fine day there came an order from the Minister, the grudging, envious Minister, setting forth that all the actors at the Tight-Rope Dancers' must be proficient on the rope as a qualification of membership. Unable to slight a command from so high a source, Frederick essayed the tight rope. But his first step upon that perilous journey brought him to the ground. He conceived a distaste for that manner of entrance, and said farewell to the cradle of his glory. He departed in tears and entered Franconi's. At Franconi's a new difficulty met him. Not a tight rope this time, but a horse, and the artist, no sooner mounted, must charge into the heat of the fray. And Frederick, poor man, fell off the horse as he had fallen from the rope. So, *faute de mieux*, he entered the *Odéon*. On such circumstances must glory wait! Had he never been made to attempt the tight-rope, Frederick might not be standing today at the forefront of Romantic Drama, alone, supreme.

Felix. But let us return to Deburau. Great as had been the progress of his theatre, Deburau had had no part in it. He had stayed where he was, unknown, one of the crowd. Ever last, ever least, he, Deburau, with his sisters and brothers, with M. and Mme. Godot, with the combatants in battle, with Frederick, even with Felix the Harlequin, Felix who was so good to him, Felix who guessed that a talent lay hidden within that soul all shut away from people's sight. It was Felix who one day lent Deburau his Harlequin's habit and mask, and in that habit, Deburau felt his heart expand. For the first time in his life the crowd observed him, for the first time the applause of the audience was for him. They had mistaken him for Felix!

Deburau Would Like to Die. Still, Deburau was unhappy. His obscurity weighed upon him. He shuddered at the prospect of continuing in a life so full of hardships, and seriously contemplated making an end of it all. But that one moment of despair was the last our artist was ever to know.

The Café in the Rue aux Ours. Through the incredible disasters, privations and varied miseries of his earliest days; by way of his unmolested penetration of the Sultan's seraglio and of his journey tête-à-tête with the Emperor Napoleon (an exploit no less beset with difficulties than the other); after being a clown at Madame Saqui's (in which rôle it was his task to create contrast in those skeleton burlesques which were improvised every night); after substituting for the great Felix; only then did Deburau attain the summit of his art. His talent revealed itself very late, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau's, and emerged out of cruel suffering. Deburau, beaten by his father, hissed wherever he went, even at the Performing Dogs'; Deburau, successively Clown, Pierrot, Harlequin, arriving nowhere despite all these titles which in France have always led to wherever their possessor desired, Deburau took fresh heart one night, the very night when despair had led him into a tavern on the Rue aux Ours on his way to the parapets of the Austerlitz Bridge. It was a tavern much frequented in those days by fencing masters, wrestling masters, literary men and the vaudeville artists of the hour for whom it was not then the fashion to wear beards on their chins or canary gloves on their hands or lorgnettes hung round their necks. This closed circle was desperately literary, as are all circles of the elect. This tavern was the scene of much conversation upon the Theatre, and the names of Talma and Potier, who in those days were still in their youth, would escape from time to time out of a cloud of tobacco smoke to the resonant accompaniment of a swallow of beer.

VII

ON the night of which I speak, so loud were the exclamations, so unanimous the admiration, so heart-felt the enthusiasm with which they talked of Talma, that Deburau had borne in upon him, all unsought, the meaning of glory. For the first time he realized how extraordinary must be the power of this glory, that an actor possessing it could penetrate right into the heart of a fencing master, a wrestling master and a man of letters. The name of Talma aroused the genius that lay slumbering in that timid soul. Deburau no longer wished to die. He left the inn with a vow that he too would become the first in his art, according to his kind, the Talma of the Boulevard du Temple. And praise God, he kept his word. He is Deburau no less than Talma is Talma.

His Progress. What makes him Deburau I cannot say. He has indeed revolutionized his art. He has created a new type of clown when one thought that all the possible varieties had been long since exploited. Where other clowns are fussy, he is cool; where they are full of inconsequential

raptures, he is calm and sensible; in him you no longer see the clown rushing to and fro without rhyme or reason; he is a stoic of the deepest dye, mechanically yielding to the impression of each moment as it comes, an actor empty of passion, devoid of words, almost without a face, who yet says it all, expresses it all, mocks at it all, who could play all the comedies of Molière without uttering a syllable, who is aware of all the stupidities of the world and times in which he lives, and gives them life, an inimitable genius, that appears intermittently upon the scene, takes a look round, opens its mouth, shuts its eyes, vanishes, returns to make us laugh or melt our hearts to pity, and all with an inexpressible charm.

His Studies. He is a man who has thought much, pondered much, hoped much, endured much. He is the people's actor and the people's friend, a chatterbox, a greedy, loafing rascal, impassive, insurgent, one with them. Deburau discovered a whole new method of comedy when he evolved this character of the dumb, satirical commentator, and how prodigal he is with that gift of satire which is so inexhaustibly his own, and by virtue of which he stands so high above all other clowns! Do you suffer today from one of those moods of ennui in which you long to be able to distract your mind without fatigue? Then go to the Tight-Rope Dancers', go and see Deburau. Go at once. There, and nowhere else, will you find that unvenomous delight, that interest in the matter for its own sake, that humour innocent of obscenity, that satire innocent of spite, which comedy has been promising us so long. And at the Tight-Rope Dancers' it is neither a matter of comedy of manners nor comedy of intrigue, neither of historical comedy nor farce, nor of drama nor of anything else which the critics have classified and defined, but something is in it of them all. There you will find mingled and compounded together all types but the tedious type. Yes, as I have said, nobody but Deburau can show you comedy today.

Proofs. The curtain rises, and in the first moment you congratulate yourself upon a comedy where no one speaks, no one cracks any jokes. There you are, delivered for the nonce from all the convoluted little sentences, the delicate persiflage, the guffaw, the *double-entendres*, the piquant allusions, the interminable ingenuities, the Languedocian, the Gascon, the Norman dialects, all the dialects, indeed, all the speeches which are the warp-and-woof of modern comedy. Blessed audience! By your mere presence at the Tight-Rope Dancers' you sit all safe and sheltered from tirade and song and romance and final couplet, even from *vers croisés* such as M. Ozaneaux affects!

VIII

Nor is this all. Delivered from modern dialogue, you are at the same time delivered from modern plot. You are at the Tight-Rope Dancers' and all our comedy bankers have disappeared; all our good-looking young

men in canary gloves, all our elderly army men, all our philanthropists, all the Faubourg Saint-Germain, all the Chaussée d'Antin, in fine, the whole comic world which M. Scribe and his pallid copyists have been exploiting ever since the Restoration. Within our clown's theatre, that world has died as dead as a door-nail. Deburau will not touch those people, never fear! Any more than he will touch the little marquesses of the Louis XV period. Oh dear no! The perfume of musk, the powder and paint, the Cross of Honour, the Cordons Bleus, the flurries on the stock exchange, the artists' studios, the little drawing-rooms all so prettily gilded, the *soubrettes* in silk aprons, the great ladies in their carriages, all this pretty little world we know with its business of wars and politics and sentiment, so pretty, above all, so graceful; ah, yes indeed! But have no fear. Deburau has never seen a drawing-room; he maintains that *soubrettes* no longer exist, that the comic types have been all effaced, that the man of finance, the politician, the soldier, the poet, all look alike and have the same face and the same clothes. And from this he deduces the theory that the comedy of former days has become impossible in this levelled society, and asks our leave to invent a new type as he sees it. Let him, he is sure to amuse you, but he makes the condition that his comedy shall have no words, no plot and no hero. Confront our great actors with this problem, and see how they will answer you.

Definition. Forward then, my Clown! He is not this man or that with a name in his own right and an assured position in society; he is the people, always in poverty, as they are, and joyous, melancholy, sick, well, beating, beaten, musician, poet, idiot, by turns. It is the people whom Deburau represents in his dramas. Chief of his gifts is his oneness with them. He knows what entertains them, what makes them laugh, what makes them angry; he knows what they admire; he knows their moods; he knows them thoroughly. He has seen them as Mazurier saw his monkeys; he possesses them completely. Step up, men of the working-classes, beat your wife, fondle your children, run into debt, get out of debt, marry off your daughter, poke fun at your doctor and at your father confessor, respect your magistrate, cry without shame, cry your eyes out; then, the next moment, become the wag, the gracioso, the orator, the gay dog, the lady-killer. If you are wholly of the common people you will have your moments of wealth when you will swagger in taverns, dance like a gallant at way-side inns, duel in style at the outskirts of the town, all in an endless orgy of jokes and gibes. Oh, you gentlemen of comedy, with your one *rôle* of which you are so proud, and a ready-made *rôle* at that, *Le Misanthrope*, your *Tartufe*, what not, how very small you all appear when set beside my hero!

He is the People Themselves. My Hero is gracious and witty in all the weathers of fortune. He laughs when he is beaten, and when he beats others he laughs also. Throughout his *rôle* he will not speak a word, but

attend to him and see my people, my people. Study them in my wonderful clown. Clearly he is making fun of you, but mind, without a word. His special taunt for vice and power is a certain grimace, a grimace so piquant that all the wit of Beaumarchais would bow before it. He will follow this grimace, which is all the vengeance he permits himself for the time being, with wilder capers than before. At once he has become again the drunkard, the picker of quarrels, surly, truculent, kindly. The instinct of the people informs every gesture. He is a thousand actors then, a thousand fascinating actors in one, and fascination and laughter attend him. Now these thousand actors, these thousand faces, these thousand grimaces, these thousand postures, this brusque elation, this short-lived sorrow, this tenderness so quick to come and to go, all, all this, to the shame of our theatres be it said, has but one name, and its name is Deburau!

Décor. In your picture of this actor, bring his setting also to mind. It is the setting of the common people, the broom, the saucepan, the wash-tub, the dustbin; stool, table, glass, comb, pipe, tinder-box, mirror, ladder, jug; how should one count them all? Consider too, the places and people my hero frequents; public houses, pawnshops, barns, attics, *cabarets*, the *Place de Grève*, churches, theatres, woods, road-side taverns where one may dance, rivers with their clear waters, country villages, turbulent alleys, small shops, booths, food-wagons, women sausage-vendors, bill-posters, Punch and Judy shows, street-organs, tight-rope dancers, town criers. The setting is always changing, his world is constantly turning about and about. Rain succeeds the sunshine, it is dark, it is day, it hails. And come what may, wherever, whatever the scene, our clown is equal to the occasion. He will bring a scene of mourning to life for you as vividly as tavern revelry. This singular man has as yet no idea how great he is; he has the naïveté of all great artists; he is as poor as the poorest and least of his kind; he is adored by the people whose counterfeit presentment he offers so naturally, so charmingly. He is all grace and wit, this penniless fellow whose genius has no support but what he is able to earn in his own person; he is not even the holder of a single share in his theatre; he has even been seen to plead before a jury against his barbarous employers who compelled him to dress in a cellar, he, the first actor of his age!

The Famous Trial. The history of this case, not extremely memorable in itself, is not without honour for Justice, however. Having received the appeals for and against our artist, the jury found itself obliged by law to award the case to his employers with costs, but, touched to compassion for his genius, they further decided that although he must continue to dress in the cellar, the management was to remove at its own expense, the fungi which grew in that very novel green-room.

Even apart from the human drama of his life, Deburau possesses a peculiar personal charm. There is something in the very uncertainty of this improvised drama that will attract you in spite of yourself. They have

now transported the very same type of drama to the *Nouveautés*, amidst the luxurious surroundings of a wealthy theatre designed for patrons of wealth and social importance. And strange though it may seem, wealth has not injured it. The English clowns had the whole of Paris running as they passed through; their drama was perfectly able to withstand the brilliance of the boxes and the uproar of one of the finest orchestras in France. Let who can explain why this type of drama should succeed so signally in two such opposite theatres. As for me, and I have given much thought to the matter, I believe that we find the dramas so entrancing and the other kind so tedious, because in the latter we are forced, willy-nilly, to follow the ideas of some author, any author, clumsily reiterating already oft-repeated words, while in the drama of Deburau we are given the joy of making our drama to suit ourselves, introducing our own dialogue, so that in a confounding of ideas and objects, in a sort of waking dream in which your ideas keep pace with the actor's, the scene-shifter's and the musician's, you enjoy yourself almost as much as if you were actually asleep!

Is it not altogether too delightful in these revolutionary times, in this worm-eaten old world of ours and in the midst of the kind of literature that is current today, is it not altogether too delightful, I say, to know of a place where you may sleep wide awake!

IX

At long last, having emerged from every test adversity could devise, happiness came to our Hero. The appreciation of the audiences made his situation tolerable at last; at any rate, it gave him hope of a new life for which he had not dared to hope. Once his public secured, the poor slave now became king in his turn. The brambles through which he had made his dramatic journey now disappeared, and made way for the laurels and roses. The sun which had never smiled upon him before, now rose clear and splendid upon his day. What a thing it is to be chosen by the crowd, its favorite entertainer! Enter, they laugh! Exit, they laugh again! To be constantly pointed out! To have no more incognito than a prince, to hear on all sides as one walked abroad, even in the ordinary clothes of a civilian, "There he goes! That is he!" Such is life in the world of the drama. And this was the paradise into which Deburau was now admitted. His environment changed completely. He became the object of jealousy, envy, and intrigue. He had become Somebody in the theatre where he now made his appearance at three in the afternoon. The door-girl greeted him, the usher greeted him. Ladies dreamt about him. Not a mother of a family of comic artists but breathed the wish, as she went to bed at night, that her daughter might find such a husband. After glory followed love: love and glory, they are twin gods and go

hand-in-hand, straight forward. Women find reputations attractive; they like to examine at close range the vast public hubbub which even the wisest among men seek with such avidity. Love came to Deburau then. But indiscreet for others, the great man is discreet for himself. He knows what he owes to womanhood and to himself. On the subject of his loves, therefore, he has nothing to say. It would appear, however, that the illustrious Bohemian, having arrived at the very peak of his art, did not wholly reject the opportunity of revenging himself upon women for the scant attention and interest they had shown him until that time.

Love. In this connexion we have heard the story of Mademoiselle Levaux and the dog Coquette. Mlle. Levaux had the heart of an artist, which is to say that her poor heart was full of feeling which she yearned to express. She had a pretty little green-painted shop on the Boulevard du Temple where she sold hot *galettes* and light *brioques* upon which the audiences innocently regaled the intervals. Mlle. Levaux followed the birth and development of her neighbour Deburau, but never once did that ingrate perceive her there, brooding over him with her soul in her eyes. There she would be, palpitating, filled with anxiety and unhappiness, often heedless of her customers, who, finding themselves ignored, would pass on, so little did she care whether her business flourished or not as she burned more fiercely than did her pastries on the stove! And Deburau saw nothing. Oh, woe!

Coquette. With his rise in fortune, Deburau permitted himself the luxury of a little dog, one of the clever survivors of the troupe of Performing Dogs who had been his first *confrères*. This dog's name was Coquette. Since the day which bereft her of her theatre, once so well patronized, and with it of her pretty *rôles*, her nice fresh frocks, her admirers in the corridors, her dainties in the dressing-room and the applause of her public, Coquette had taken refuge in the bosom of philosophy, that gentle comforter, who fails us never though often we fail her. The great actress, Coquette, fallen from her high place in the drama and forced for her livelihood to follow, four-footed now, her illustrious master, gave to Deburau the devotion of her whole soul. The intelligent animal, I speak of Coquette, realized (even as did Mlle. Levaux) the drama implicit in Deburau, and foresaw the fame awaiting him. And like that fame, she followed after him. But to the disgrace of fame be it said, the dog Coquette gave it the signal to come where she led.

Coquette Again. Past Mlle. Levaux' shop therefore went Coquette and her master together. Unable to attract the glances of the artist, the young pastry-cook next conceived the idea of earning the esteem of the dog. How profound are the ruses of love! Behold Mlle. Levaux placing her shop at Coquette's disposal! She lavishes delicacies upon the little creature, warm pastries, Rheims biscuits, cream-puffs. Coquette, less inflexible than her master, consented to be touched by these confections. She was

graciously pleased, kind dog, to devastate the pretty merchant's entire stock. With the tips of her teeth, fastidiously as a fine lady, she accepted the delicacies from the poor girl's white and trembling hand. But oh dear, oh dear! Mlle. Levaux might advance daily in the graces of Coquette, thanks to her sacrifices, but the Hero of her plot remained ever as cold, ever as aloof. Never a word of thanks to the young shopkeeper, though she donned every day her prettiest dresses. Not a word of thanks, though she gave her best pastries to the dog Coquette! Now and then, in her distress, she would kiss Coquette; wasted kisses which the ingrate did not even see. One day she detained Coquette longer than usual; Deburau whistled angrily without so much as turning his head. Poor Eugénie Levaux!

Disappointment. So keen was her sorrow, so great her pain at seeing her love ignored, that she married a fat butcher of the *Quartier de la Bastille*. She went to live amongst blood and corpses; she breathed the odour of fresh-killed flesh for the rest of her life; she grew as opulent as a receiver's wife. What a pity! Now her cheeks are heavy, and as red as the red ribbons in her bonnet; her arms are fat, her hands pudgy; her fingers are lost in enormous rings; a gold chain hangs heavily on her neck and rests in pride upon a bosom of india-rubber. But by the rise and fall of that bosom the observer may still discern that the butcher's wife has kept her heart! Fortune has not changed her. For the sake of the ungrateful wretch she loves she would give up her legs of lamb today as gladly as in former days she gave up her ginger bread. By sheer force of wealth she obtained a child of Coquette's to guard her butchery. Never would she have permitted her husband to be followed by a bulldog such as the other butchers, his colleagues, affected. This has earned Mlle. Levaux' husband a reputation for foppishness in the quarter, but the good butcher is consoled in the esteem of his wife. He has ceased to regret the orthodox bulldog and has grown as fond of Coquette's little pug son as if he were the size of a calf. Moreover, this incident of their dog is the only one in all their married life in which Mlle. Levaux opposed her husband and caused him pain. Happy butcher! But what would he say if he could penetrate as easily into his wife's heart as he does into the heart of a sheep?

Drama. We have been told of other loves, but these we shall pass over. One of the stage-boxes could tell you where another Heroine used to sit, one of Deburau's earliest admirers, she. Every night, forsaking the ball for her love, she came to that stage-box to encourage the dawning genius with her smile. What was the end of it? Nobody knows! She has now surrendered herself body and soul to drama! For all ignored or unrequited passion, art holds out consolation!

Retaliation. In spite of the dense screen behind which Deburau conceals his private life, we know that he was not always invulnerable. He fell dis-

tractedly in love with a young *grisette*, a circumstance which she accepted however, as a matter of course. You may estimate the progress upward of our Hero's situation by his aspiration, all at once, to one of such high station as a milliner. Yet so it was, and then the shoe was on the other foot. It was Deburau now who made all the advances, he who bowed the head, he who loved. Mlle. Levaux, though all unbeknown, was well revenged. Be sure you know your milliner for what she is, the aristocrat of *grisettes*. Disdainful, giddy, capricious, always pretty! She has her vapours, her languors, her scorn, her whims, her romances to read, her dreams to fulfil; no fine lady more so. It cost infinite patience, infinite devotion for our artist to remain yoked to such a love. She commanded, he obeyed, instantly, implicitly, and as effectively as in former days he had been wont to obey his father. One evening Deburau was playing an important *rôle* (important *rôles* were now his) when the young person became indisposed, right in the middle of his act. This was how the romance became known. At the critical moment in the drama, her face went white. Her lover, seeing this, turned white too, whereupon the pallor of his already flour-whitened face became ghastly to behold. The scene over, Deburau flew to his divinity's side; the quicker to reach her, he pulled his civilian trousers over his Pierrot's pantaloons, and in that guise you may picture him escorting his mistress home. It was a wet night, the rain came down in torrents, the mud of the boulevard splashed him everywhere. In the sad circumstances, the storm and the illness of his beloved, Deburau neglected the precautions his costume demanded. Heedless he plunged through the mud, heedless offered the flour on his face to the fierceness of the weather. He remembered his love, all else was oblivion! He returned to the theatre, out of breath, to find the stage-manager (yes, the theatre has a stage-manager), looking for him everywhere. Deburau it was who in the final act had to lead back to her father's arms a daughter who had been seduced. The moment had arrived, the audience was growing restive, the daughter was impatient for her father, the father for his daughter. But Deburau turned up at last, half black, half white. He flung off his trousers of heavy cloth, mended the flour on the side of his face from which it had been washed off by the rain, and made his entrance without a tremor, leading Columbine by the hand, imperturbable as you have always seen him. Nobody, not even the beautiful Artist-soul in the stage-box, could have guessed that he had just taken an ailing mistress home.

It is by episodes like this that he has gained, little by little, his unprecedented empire over the audiences of his district.

Poverty. Certain people, whose avidity for knowledge nothing escapes, will enquire why Deburau, in such a storm and with his mistress so ill, did not take a cab? Little do they know, those people, the conditions under which dramatic artists live and how poor those artists can be. At the time of which I speak, Deburau was receiving his old salary, augmented only

by four sous on Sundays, and this extra he spent on little sugar dogs or barley-sugar pipes, or a bunch of violets, or a glass of cocoa for his fair one. What more could any woman of sensibility have desired? A cab would have devoured his gratuity for four months!

The details of the artist's life, never before brought to light, will furnish the matter for my next part.

Let us then leave now the poetry of my Hero's career and enter with him into its prose. Such, alas, is the history of all histories; poetry first, truth afterwards; the youth growing to manhood, the grown man; the actor without a *rôle*, the actor bound fast by contracts. Amen.

PART II

X

IN this part, which is devoted to Deburau's remuneration (and highly materialistic though it be, it is not without interest for certain people), we are happy to be able to reassure our readers concerning the present lot of our artist. His situation today is as brilliant as it was once lamentable. Having risen to fame, having made the fortune of his theatre, and this so effectually that it could hold up its head and pay its bills to the day while half the other theatres in Paris were falling after many struggles into shameful bankruptcy, Deburau at last reaped his well-merited reward. And it was high time for the good fairy as in the Mother Goose tradition, to show herself. When eventually she did appear, however, it was not in the form of a goose at all, but as Monsieur Nicolas-Michel Bertrand. Many fruitless steps and much unrewarded rumaging through the archives of that kingdom of comedy procured us finally, by good luck, the possession of the following document whose importance in the history of art let no one seek to diminish. It is ours now by right of conquest. Upon it is to be seen, twice repeated, the exceedingly rare signature of Deburau, in which respect we are more fortunate than England, which possesses but a single signature of the great poet Shakespeare.

THEATRE

OF THE

TIGHT-ROPE DANCERS

CONTRACT

Between the undersigned, M. Nicolas-Michel BERTRAND, Manager of the Theatre of Tight-Rope Dancers, residing at No. 18 Boulevard du Temple, Paris, party of the first part;

And M. Jean-Baptiste DEBURAU, Artist-Tight-Rope Dancer-Mime, residing at No. 28 Faubourg du Temple, party of the second part; it is agreed as follows, to wit:

I, BERTRAND, hereby engage M. DEBURAU to fulfill in my company the rôle of Pierrot, as well as any other rôle allotted to him by myself or the Director.

This contract is entered into under the conditions set forth in the following clauses, to wit:

- I. I, Jean-Baptiste DEBURAU, agree to play *all rôles whatsoever* allotted to me by the Manager or the Director, by which is understood dancing and taking part in the ballets, divertissements, marches, pantomimes, and all other pieces presented; *taking part in the battles*; accompanying the troupe when it is engaged to perform at private or public festivities, costs of transportation only to be defrayed by the Management.
- II. I promise to be regular in attendance at preliminary and at dress rehearsals; and agree to all fines imposed by the Management and of which I am already cognizant, these to be paid by me as and when incurred without protest or argument; and agree to arrive at the theatre on Sundays and holidays at three o'clock, and on week-days at four, for the purpose of employing my talents *at as many performances* as the Manager or his Director may order.
- III. I agree to conform to all rules, present and future, which the Management may think fit to make, and *to be satisfied with such lighting, heating arrangements* and costumes as the Management shall furnish.
- IV. I agree not to absent myself from Paris except by written permission of the Manager, and to appear at the theatre on each day when performances are held, *whether I myself am playing or not*, in order that the Management may substitute me, at its discretion, in case unforeseen circumstances prevent the playing of any number on the program.
- V. *In case of sickness, the Management reserves the right to suspend the Artist's salary until the day of his return.*
- VI. In case of destruction by fire or of the closing of the Theatre by order of the authorities or of other unforeseen and sufficient reason for terminating the performances, this contract shall be null and

void in the full sense of the law, unless the Management should declare its intention to continue the payment of salaries until further orders.

- VII. The Artist shall furnish the linen appropriate to each costume, also shoes, stockings, rouge and gloves. The Management undertakes to supply all costumes and accessories. Tight-Rope Dancers, male and female, *are to furnish everything necessary to their performance* on the tight-rope, and in a suitable manner.

Any article furnished by the Management which shall be lost or injured, by any Artist, whether by accident or design, shall be replaced at the delinquent's expense and out of his or her salary.

- VIII. *In case of drunkenness*, the Management shall impose a fine upon the delinquent, which fine shall have been stated in the tariff of fines. In case of repetition, the Manager reserves the right to break the contract and his decision to do so shall be absolute.

- IX. I agree not to perform in any capacity whatsoever in any other theatre, private or public, without the written consent of the Manager, on pain of a fine of three hundred francs.

In consideration of faithful adherence to the conditions herein set forth, M. BERTRAND agrees to pay M. DEBURAU the sum of thirty-five francs every week for the duration of the present contract.

The present contract is to be valid for three years, beginning the first Monday after Easter, eighteen-hundred and twenty-eight, and ending on Palm Sunday, eighteen-hundred and thirty-one.

The parties hereunto agree and mutually consent to regard this contract as no less binding than if it were signed and witnessed before a Notary; and in case of breach on either side, the first to infringe its conditions shall pay to the other a sum in forfeit to the amount of one thousand francs.

Entered into by both parties voluntarily and in good faith, at Paris, this tenth day of December, eighteen-hundred and twenty-six.

BERTRAND

The above document approved:

DEBURAU

COMMENTARY

A CERTAIN learned jurist who happens at the same time to be a man of wit and taste, set himself to write a commentary upon "the present

contract " above, in the manner of Domat. After working at it for several days, he abandoned the idea. He had found that the clauses were so simple that they could not be explained. Lacking his commentary, which we are indeed sorry not to have, we shall ourselves make a few not too irrelevant observations upon the contract.

On the whole, for a contract with a great artist, it is couched in harsh and ill-sounding terms. The first clause, that he is to " fulfill all rôles," is in itself a categorical denial of the contract which states: " I, Nicolas-Michel, etc., engage Deburau to fulfill the rôle of Pierrot." Or does it mean that the Pierrot could be made to play Harlequin in his many aspects, or in the capacity of artist-tight-rope dance-mime, sing the songs of vaudeville? This the learned jurist does not believe, in spite of the clause " fulfill all rôles " — and neither do we. As to " marches " and " battles," we are also of the opinion that the nature of the battles should be specified. Strictly speaking, combat with the lath, by wrestling, by fisticuffs, could perhaps not be refused by a Pierrot; but combat with steel or pistols, and all such affrays as taking by storm, ambushes, pitched battles, and so forth, we consider, the jurist and I, that Deburau, engaged as a Pierrot, would be wholly within his rights to refuse. Apropos of that first clause, one more observation remains to be made, and that is the matter of " costs of transportation only " in case of touring. It is not stated how far the tours are to extend. Now, it is the jurist's opinion that if the Manager or his Director send Deburau off to a country of expensive inns — London for example, where white wine costs so much, the said Manager or his Director should consider Deburau as entitled to some reimbursement. It is, moreover, my own opinion that although the extent of the tours is not specified, Deburau could justifiably resort to law if he were required to travel beyond the frontiers, to Moscow or Vienna, say, or even to Berlin. In this we are almost at one with the learned jurist.

Article 11, relating to the payment of fines, presents a question of importance: *Quid juris*, supposing Deburau's fines should happen to total a sum in excess of the thirty-five francs a week? Would the artist have to make up the difference out of his own pocket? The jurist says Yes, adding, however, that this would be a harsh interpretation of the law. We say No, and do not hesitate to say so, having good reason in law, *since the thing would not be possible!*

Another remark on Article 11: The Artist agrees to play *as many performances* as the Manager or his Director may order. One would like to know how many this may mean? Humanity could tolerate no more than four, while custom permits up to six. A jury would be extremely hard put to it to decide this question.

And note the words " or his Director ": surely contrary to all custom in a case like this.

At a first glance, Article *iii* looks perfectly innocent. What more right and reasonable than that an Artist be required to content himself with the *lighting and heating* provided? And yet it was that fatal Article *iii* which became the subject of the memorable trial, and thereby elevated itself to the stature of that famous Article *xiv* of the old Charter which produced the July Revolution. Here is the story of our trial.

You know that in the beginning the Theatre of the Tight-Rope Dancers was a kind of cellar reached by half-a-dozen steps down. Certain alterations were lately made, after which the audience reached the hall by steps up instead of steps down. But some of the old underground portions were kept in use. In one of these our artist's dressing-room had been arranged. He dressed and undressed in the cellar. Still all damp with dramatic emotion, he descended into that dark and desolate place to divest himself of his wig and his soul, his passion and his clown's motley, a transformation beset with difficulties and exposing him to a double rheumatism, equally dangerous in both respects; rheumatism of the mind and of the body, rheumatism of the man and rheumatism of the Artist. It was a dangerous business; the love of art alone sustained him in his cellar. While the summer lasted the place was habitable enough; but when winter came with its icicles and melting snow, with the foul smell of its warming breath in that deep cave, it was not to be endured. Having achieved success at last, illusion, that magician who by his flattering enchantments casts a treacherous, roseate veil over all things — even the ugliest — illusion, little by little vanished from that cellar. And as his successes continued, the Actor came to perceive that indeed his dressing-room was somewhat damp. Now and then he would modestly remark upon it; he would say that the cellar was dark and unwholesome, that he had occupied it now for a long time, that it would cause him no pain to have a room where the light of day might penetrate. No attention was paid to his complaints; they showed him Article *iii* for answer: "I agree to be satisfied with the lighting and heating. . . ." Oh, cruelty!

There was Article *iii*, there it was, holding Deburau fast in his dungeon, banging the door in his face when he tried to tear it open, mockingly offering him the key. What Article *xiv* did to M. de Polignac, Article *iii* did to Deburau. Ah, woe! Article *xiv* it was that handed the Minister the pen that signed the fatal orders! And under the evil influence of Article *iii* Deburau vainly struggled and grew paralyzed in body and in soul.

Satisfied with the lighting and heating! Oh, this cellar! Deburau was in despair. Whichever way he turned, there stood Article *iii* before him, obdurate, gaunt, sardonic, loathsome. At meals it sat down with him, in bed it lay beside him, its soft, limp leg against the leg of the unfortunate Deburau, who crouched terrified against the wall. Oh yes, Article *iii* is a story indeed.

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

HE resolved at length to deliver himself from the monster, the murderer of his rest, no matter at what cost. He meant to know whether by exorcism, conjuration, threat, bailiffs, lawyers, by any means at the command of desperation, he could prevail against that fatal Article III. He saved three days' salary, and for the first time in his life, the happy-go-lucky Bohemian, this man who acknowledged no law, accepted society as it was, and bowed to Civil Law. He went to a bailiff, lodged his complaint, paid the fee without a sigh. To such dejection had Article III reduced him!

Pleading the Case. Summons, trial, Deburau plaintiff against the Manager; the parties appear before the judge, the lawyers plead for the Plaintiff, plead for the Defendant. Never were advocates more eloquent, more impassioned in any major cause. The counsel for the Defendant rested upon Article III as set forth. "M. Deburau," he said, "must be satisfied with the lighting and heating as they are. Now, gentlemen, the cellar in question, or to be more accurate, the ground-floor of which M. Deburau complains, is heated by an iron stove and lit by two gas-jets. It is as warm, as comfortable, as bright as it is possible to make it; and we are not only well within the limits of Article III, but far beyond them, for you will agree, gentlemen, that instead of two gas-jets we might very well have put in only one, and under the terms of the article, the Artist would have had to be satisfied with that!"

The Toadstool. We shall not dwell upon the speech of the counsel for the plaintiff. All that remains of it in our memory is its peroration, which produced an immense effect and for which its author had gone back to a weighty personage of antiquity. When the aged Cato, the sworn foe of Carthage, cast into the midst of the Roman Senate the figs he had just plucked in Dido's city, he created an impression no more profound than our advocate when, at a certain point in his speech, he cast before the judges an enormous toadstool which he had plucked in Deburau's dressing-room. It was of a dull blue colour with a rim of black, and with its powerful odour, presented every aspect of the deadly poisonous fungus which it was. At the sight of this monstrous and unspeakable object, of this repulsive plant whose breeding-place could be nothing short of the most loathsome of dunghills, the judges recoiled horror-stricken, the spectators gasped, horror and pity stared from every face. That a man should have to study his art in the neighbourhood of this poisonous growth, failing in strength as the toadstool increased, seeing his very grave yawn in the shadow cast by that obnoxious vegetable! Horrible, horrible! Never, no never, not even at the Assizes during a trial for murder in which six persons had been slaughtered and the advocates exhibited before the afflicted jury the blood-stained clothing, the murderous instruments, the

locks of hair which had been gathered in various spots about the seat of the crime; never before had jury or spectators experienced anything so appalling as this witness to human brutality suddenly brought before the bar in the form of that hideous toadstool.

The judges withdrew. We awaited the verdict with the faith men have in Heaven. The deliberations were long. At last the jury returned; the usher called for silence, the verdict was pronounced.

VERDICT

CHARLES, by the grace of God, King of France and of Navarre, to all who shall see this present, greeting, etc., etc., etc.

We Command: That the said dressing-room be disinfected immediately and without delay, and that all toadstools which do therein exist, likewise all other forms of vegetation, be destroyed within twenty-four hours, at the expense of the Management. The case is dismissed, costs being awarded to the defendants, and no further damages whatsoever.

You will find the date of this memorable verdict in the *Gazette des Tribunaux*. In our opinion there is nothing to be compared with it since the famous judgment of Solomon, which leads me to conclude with the jurist, that Article III is very harsh, but it is entirely legal.

THE COMMENTARY CONTINUED

Let us now proceed to Article IV, if you please. This article again presents an inconceivably cruel clause. "I agree," (it is still Deburau speaking, and see what they make him agree to, poor fellow, for thirty-five francs a week!), "I agree to appear at the theatre on each day when performances are held, *whether I myself am playing or not.*" *Quid juris*, if his wife were giving birth to a child, if he were engaged in a duel with fists, if he had a child to baptize, if his aged father summoned him to his deathbed? Would the wretched man actually be compelled to attend the theatre, even though he himself were not playing? The learned jurist, who inclines to severity, says no, but that the absences be as few as possible, and he appends the well-known axiom: *Non sunt entia sine necessitate multiplicanda*. Article V is a model of iniquity. The administration concerning the worst convicts in the jail of Toulon is of fatherly gentleness compared to Article V of this contract. In case of sickness the Manager does not pay his artist. That is to say, that at a time when the artist has most need of his thirty-five francs a week, he is not to be paid the where-withal to get himself taken to a hospital!

Let us note in passing that this Article V is worse than the corresponding article in contracts made by other theatres which only suspend

payment when the artist becomes ill through misconduct. Thus, if the young leading woman is in childbed and unable to present her marriage license, her salary will be suspended. In our case, supposing the Pierrot suffers a hemorrhage in his cellar due to having played six performances a day, he will be at the mercy of the manager. The learned jurist says the law is with the Manager. There is not a galley-slave alive who would sign such a contract.

There is a hint of the Jesuit about Article vi. The actor shall provide rouge and gloves. What would happen if Deburau, who does not use rouge, should require the management to pay for the flour he puts on his face? Is flour rouge in the eyes of the law? Could the Management contend that the flour is the equivalent of other make-up, therefore of rouge. All these are questions which our learned jurist could have resolved more easily than we, had he not shrunk from so arduous a task.

Such are the questions prompted by a preliminary reading of the contract. We have gone into this curious document at some length in order to impress upon our readers who were unaware of it, what it means to sign a theatrical contract, and how deplorable indeed is the existence of even the greatest actors when we see them at close range.

Advantages. In spite of all these criticisms of the contract in detail, we must however admit that the Manager of the Theatre of the Tight-Rope Dancers displayed considerable generosity in his contract with Deburau. That salary of thirty-five francs was unprecedented at the Theatre of the Tight-Rope Dancers. And in addition to the satisfaction of receiving a sum of such magnitude, there was the added satisfaction of being exempt from performing duties less compatible with the duties of an artist, such as lighting the lamps in the chandelier, taking turns at sweeping the hall, making checks, mending his own shoes, and other menial functions, of which our artist was relieved by special dispensation. It is certainly true that over and above his work as Pierrot, Deburau had charge of the arms and other properties of the theatre, but this was an honourable function enough. To be responsible for the safe-keeping of sabres, pistols and pikes, to keep this department of so vast an organization running on oiled wheels, to control the smallest details of those fairy-plays which employ the resources of the four elements combined, surely that is a noble and splendid *rôle* to fulfil, even beside the *rôle* of Pierrot! Deburau held both these offices, and an additional clause was accordingly added to his contract. Below we give this clause, which does honour to the sense of justice and to the sound judgment possessed by M. Bertrand.

ADDITIONAL CLAUSE

M. Deburau undertakes, in addition, full charge of all arms and other properties appertaining to the plays, by which it is understood that he will take care of them, distribute them every evening and put them away

after the performance. Also that he will furnish everything necessary to the various plays, old or new, the expense being shared equally by M. Deburau and M. Bertrand.

An inventory in duplicate shall be taken of all the properties given into the care of M. Deburau. These properties, and all that may in future be added to them, shall be duly recorded in the said inventory and verified by M. Deburau, who hereby undertakes to return them in good condition upon the termination of the present contract.

In consideration of this supplementary clause, M. Bertrand agrees to pay M. Deburau ten francs per week in addition to his salary, and this he hereby accepts.

Paris

10th December, 1926.

BERTRAND
DEBURAU

You noticed in the contract, no doubt, the sinister phrase, "agree to all fines imposed (and of which I am already cognizant." So did I. That tariff of fines worried me greatly, as it has worried you. I thought Deburau most fortunate to have known it! We searched and searched for that tariff! And in the end, to our infinite joy, we found it. Now we too are cognizant of a theatrical tariff of fines. There it stands, the indispensable complement to the contract; we publish it for you; we deliver it as it is, and leave you to meditate deeply upon the progress which the art of the drama has made in the course of time. Conceive of a manager able to calculate their actors' drunkenness according to mathematical scale, a scale from one franc to six francs. There is genius for you!

TARIFF OF FINES

The Tariff of Fines is as Follows:

	Francs	Centimes
1. For arriving a quarter of an hour late at ordinary rehearsals	1.	00
2. For arriving half an hour late at ordinary rehearsals	1.	50
3. For missing a whole act	2.	00
4. For missing two acts	4.	50
5. For missing a whole rehearsal	6.	00
The fine will be <i>double</i> in the case of dress rehearsals.		
6. For missing an entrance during the performance	1.	00
7. For missing one act	3.	00

8.	For two acts	6.	00	
9.	For the whole play	12.	00	
10.	For disturbing a rehearsal or performance			
	From 75 c. to	2.	00	
11.	For arriving at the theatre in a drunken condition	From 1 to	6.	00
12.	For fighting or quarrelling inside the theatre			
	From 1 to	12.	00	
13.	For putting a substitute into a part without permission	6.	00	

And if, to this contract, to this tariff, to the innumerable petty inventions of managerial despotism, you add special orders, new rules daily devised, improvised fines for particular occasions, you will have a more or less complete idea of what an actor has to suffer in the difficult conduct of his profession. For the law of the theatre, mind, is a law of iron, inexorable, without consideration and without charity, a veritable hair-shirt of a law, a law to dread. We talk of liberty a great deal, too much perhaps; but liberty is everybody's today except the poor actor's. The very day he enters his theatre he places himself under an unmerciful and tyrannical law; at one and the same moment he thrusts his head into a hateful yoke and his legs into unhealthy trousers. The following document, which we obtained by dint of much effort, as in the case of the tariff, is an irrefutable witness to the incredible despotism which exists unsuspected in the theatre. This too we deliver to our readers to speak for itself:

REGULATION AS TO LAUNDRY

Mme. Guerpon is hereby expressly forbidden, under penalty of twenty francs' fine, to change any lady's costume or to have their dresses laundered without permission.

The Management knows what is due to the good standing of the theatre, and it is no employe's concern to impose laws upon the Management. Mme. Guerpon is also forbidden to give out trousers to actors who have no stockings. In short, she is to dispose of none of the articles in her care unless by formal order of the Management.

Paris.

21st May, 1827

COT D'ORDAN

XI

Reflections on the drama at the Tight-Rope Dancers'. Parallel between Pierrot and *Le Misanthrope*. Regrets. Properties.

THIS is the whole of that drama, analyzed as completely and accurately as possible. If you will read this dramatic outline with the attention it deserves, you will be able to form your own judgment upon the dramas of the Tight-rope Dancers'. They consist of a network of extraordinary incidents and deplorable mishaps such as we experience in dreams; a veritable nightmare in which earth and heaven, reason and fantasy, prose and verse are equally involved. And Pierrot, a prey to the malice of both Harlequin and Columbine, do you know what Pierrot is? He is Molière's Misanthrope. Molière's Misanthrope spends himself in indignation over the freaks of his world; the Pierrot of the Tight-rope Dancers' spends himself in indignation over the common people whose brutal onslaughts he is always ready to face. Molière's Misanthrope succumbs to the calumnies and ridicules of drawing-rooms; Deburau is the butt of blows and kicks. The imitation is obvious to all, and I might push the parallel still further. But I refrain. Parallels are too easy for anyone to spend much time in drawing them.

I will merely call your attention to the care with which the niceties of social observance are upheld by both these great personages in the world of men, the Misanthrope and the Pierrot. The Misanthrope is given to rages, he is surly and proud, a great gentleman amongst great ladies and great gentlemen. Pierrot, on the other hand, one with the common people, with Columbine, daughter of the common people, Pierrot is patient to excess. Pierrot is a loafer; he jeers under his breath; he has a gullible air; he affects stupidity; his calm is a thing to marvel at; he is Deburau's own creation. You ought to see him, with his tight lips and hesitant manner, his quizzical smile, the vacant air he can so splendidly assume. You ought to see him in the rain defying the elements; fattening himself in kitchens, beating and being beaten, murdering and being murdered, impervious to surprise even when he pulls a red bullet out of Harlequin's wound. Admirable! Never has an actor appeared in a more complicated drama with more energy, patience, presence of mind and wit.

Doubtless *Ma Mère L'Oie* astonished you with its unheard of succession of tableaux and scenery, the like of which you would only expect to see at the Opera itself. What would you say if you were to be initiated into all the details of this vast administration? What would you say if Madame Guerpon, so generous with trousers to those who wore their shoes over stockingless feet, were to lead you by the hand into her wardrobe rooms? What amazement would be yours upon beholding the array of gowns, silken scarves, embroidered coats, costumes for clowns, magistrates, harlequins, bohemians, noble lords, XVIIIth century costumes, gold and spangles, the Middle Ages and Ninety-Three; the whole history of France, and the whole history of Rome, and of Germany and of Italy, the history of all Europe in costume, presided over by Madame Guerpon, and for a Four-sous Theatre!

After this, how should the people of France be other than the most educated in the universe!

I wish Madame Gueron had been more accessible. I should have obtained from her — oh, not trousers, not after that notice! — but at least the list of costumes in duplicate. But Madame Gueron is not accessible at all; she is terrified of seeming to lay down the law to the Management!

I will give you instead a list of the properties. Properties is the name given in the theatre to all articles of furniture, implements and so forth used in a production. The furniture of the theatre itself is not part of the properties. In the early days of the theatre, the property was almost unknown; it practically did not exist. But modern drama has rendered it almost indispensable. Today there is not a theatre anywhere but has its property room, its property-man, its property budget. A book might be written upon this subject, but I shall simply give you the beginning of a list of properties in Deburau's theatre:

One steel watch-chain; one small bell; one globe; one desk; coloured box, with drawers; one cardboard telescope; one magician's wand; one saucepan, tin; whisky glasses; one jar with handle; one wooden fork; one sceptre, gilded wood; two clarinets; two cardboard shields; one map on two rollers; eleven ragged books; clockwork snakes; box for a three-cornered hat; one tin box with loose lid; eight branches of laurel blossom; one goblet of gilded wood; trunks of different sizes; one lock of hair; one pastry dish, cardboard; one small bottle; one copper lantern; thirty wooden guns; one scarf of green silk, embroidered in gold; one tricolour scarf; one crutch; one cardboard loaf; three barking dogs; one black cat; one peacock; one cock; four cannon-balls; one live falcon; one diligence; fifteen Crosses of the Legion of Honour; one shower of rain, composed of tinsel paper in a box; four crowns of gold leaves; two golden lyres, painted wood; one royal seal; one golden key; dice; an album; a two-handled sword; a pipe; one game of lotto; two razors; one strop; one bouquet of white roses; letters written and otherwise; two cog-wheels with a handle; paint-brushes; visiting-cards; a cap-and-bells; one bust; one coffin; iron scales; one tambourine; one box of nails; one black mask; one large hammer; two foils; one pair of compasses; one bundle of umbrellas; seven coffee cups with saucers; one pair of spurs; one crucifix; one red parchment and one steel pen; one sponge; two triangles; one violin; one clap of thunder, composed of thirty sheets of tin; one embroidery frame; one bunch of keys; purses of different sizes; counters of copper and tin; one silver medallion decorated with precious stones; one milk-jug; one schoolboy's basket; one cage with bird; one spinning-wheel; one whip; one barometer; one large fan; twelve deaths-heads.

XII

REFLECTIONS . PRICE OF ADMITTANCE . ART FOR THE NOBILITY . INDUSTRIES .
 APOTHEOSIS

TWELVE death's-heads! You have but to follow this list to trace the progress, or rather, the decay of dramatic art. If the list had been drawn up in chronological order, it would have begun with the goblet of tragedy and ended with the death's-head. For a long time the goblet and the dagger were the sole accessories of dramatic art in France; now we have come to the skeleton and the skull, which no doubt derive their existence from the poison and the dagger so constantly employed.

The perusal of this unusual document will enable the attentive reader to realize the great amount of labour involved in even the smallest stage-piece, the endless details, enormous expenses and then bank-notes into the bargain.

And if, to this ever accumulating mass of petty objects you add the matter of costumes representing every land and twenty centuries; and if to the matter of costumes you add the decorations which daily invade the stage, ever more, ever finer, ad infinitum; and if, on top of all this, costumes, scenery, properties, the play, and the music at the beginning and end of the show, if anyone were to tell you that the whole thing costs you but:

1 franc, in the stalls, if you are rich;
 or 4 sous among the gods, if you are mean or poor;

And if anyone were to tell you that in spite of that low-price and that high-price, both well within the reach of all, the crowd still needed to be coaxed in by a poor old man with a hoarse and broken voice walking up and down before the entrance, shouting:

“Come in, Gentlemen; come 'in, Ladies!”

you would be astonished, would you not? And in your astonishment you would wonder what art was coming to? What future could it expect? And well might you ask it in these days of ours!

For it is coming to nothing, it has ceased to move. It has come to a standstill at the door of the Tightrope Dancers', shouting in a wheezy voice, “Come in, Gentlemen!” Tired and hoarse; wearing glasses and a pigtail. By way of the extreme of luxury and the extreme of poverty, it has come to rest in this lowliness. Here it finds comfort, it lives, it breathes, it comes alive, and remains unwedded, which leads us to hope that it is the last of its race, and the Lord knows there would be small cause for weeping if that were so.

There are in Paris several theatres consecrated to art in lowliness, and their case is far from unhappy. The Odéon, that beautiful house in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, "The Empress's Own," built at the expense of the House of Peers by permission of Bonaparte himself, three times the Odéon has been ruined by a "low theatre" in its neighbourhood, the *Théâtre de Bobineau*, a delightful place whither the law student leads his beloved, whither the medical student betakes himself in search of a heart to beat in sympathy with his own. Search your Paris: everywhere you shall find the little theatre beside the large one, draining it of its sap and nourishing itself upon its substance like an insect. The *Théâtre-Français*, livid and horrible to see, sprawls its transparent skeleton beside the portly *Vaudeville*. The *Folies-Dramatiques* is devouring the *Gaité*; the *Ambigu* winds itself about the legs of the *Opéra*; Madame Saqui leaps and dances herself almost to death a score of times daily to keep breath inside her waxworks. It is a massacre, a slaughter of theatres. And the Parisian public, unmoved by all this dramatic rivalry, goes loafing past the door, agape, noses in the air. For your Parisian of the mean streets is above all else a loafer and a wag. Let a troupe of actors annoy him with their importunities, and watch him slyly pretend to be caught in their snare. He approaches, smiles, pulls his money out of his pocket; the man in the box-office trembles with joy and holds out his hand! Bah! He's buying a fried apple or a piece of gingerbread or a boiled sausage or some other dainty which he will stand and devour to the bitter end, right in the disappointed doorway. Be an artist in the face of that if you can!

The low theatre, then, is the only one possible today. Do not talk to me of the others; they are dead. Forsaken are the great porticoes of the drama; grass is pushing up through tragedy's floors; even Brutus's toga vainly entreats an indispensable laundress. No, for sign of life, even the faintest, you must go to the low theatre. And you will find it truly living. And what a crowd of people it maintains besides itself, within and without! Within, a horde of veterans come to relive in memory the days of their glory. A leading lady begins to lose her hair and teeth; she becomes leading lady at one of the low theatres. Everything old and cracked and toothless and grimy and unhealthy is ideal for the low theatre. The low theatre is to dramatic art what the hackney-cab horse is to the thoroughbred. In his prime he draws his phaeton-and-six, and at last comes down to his cab and two. Would you care to see the ancient relics of the late Comedy and Drama? Go to the low theatre; you will find them there. What a book one could make of this folk and their ways, these sensibilities in spangles, these vices in dirty linen, this stripped and naked art which has discarded even its make-up!

So much for the theatre inside. Outside, it supports no fewer and no poorer wretches. Go one of these days at noon and loiter about in the door-

way of one of these narrow caverns of the drama. Watch these ancients, Achilles once, Clowns today; last century's Iphigenias, now Columbines, all basking in the sunshine like oysters. And about these ragged artist-folk, the street-cooks, the alley Charlets, the gutter Beauvilliers, come swarming. And after these follow the walking-stick vendors, practical philosophers who transform cherrywood into ebony; distillers whose beverage is so much to the taste of the masons; and others without end. Inextricably about the theatre door, this world of hangers-on lives, moves and has its being. Then at four o'clock when the noonday meal is over and the table cleared, which is to say when everyone has wiped his thumb, the actors return to their corridors and the rest go about their various businesses, the master of the *claque* gathers his acolytes together at the wine-merchant's, the flower-girls, pretty derelicts of twenty-two, offer the passers-by yesterday's withered posies. Meantime within, the chandelier is lit, the clarinet pretends to accord with the fiddle, the theatre fills, there is applause or hissing for the authors of the low drama. For the next four hours life is concerned wholly with playing, hissing, laughing at, crying at, shouting at the low drama; with assassinations witnessed and committed; with kicks in the rear to point a moral lesson; and thanks to the low theatre the Prefect of Police breathes easily for a moment.

All honour to Deburau! All honour to the king of the low theatre! Obstacles notwithstanding, he has not ceased to be the most chaste, the most original of artists. He began, instead of ending, with his hackney-cab, but he drew it as a noble animal born to a higher destiny. Honour to him! He made a vocation of necessity, an art of trade, turned torment into joy. For while others descend into that low world, he was born to it. He is proud of the low theatre and it of him, because neither has sought to raise or debase the other; because both accept their estate in all simplicity! All honour to him! Deburau has indeed conquered a seemingly immortal prejudice, he brought a chimera to reality: a great actor and a cheap seat! He has proved that illusion in the drama is no particular theatre's prerogative; that it may belong to all places, all times and all aspects. So keen is his intelligence, so mobile and expressive his face, that he could play the whole of Regnard without uttering a word if he would condescend to play Regnard. Great actors of the past, illustrious descendants of Dugazon and Dazincourt, you may keep your sumptuous wardrobes, your ludicrous powdered wigs, your traditional renderings with every inflection indicated as in a musical score; you may keep your brilliant theatre, your ostentatious decorations, your glittering crystal chandelier; cling to your Molière, the greatest genius of ancient as of modern times. Deburau leaves it all to you. Deburau needs nothing but his Clown's dress, a little flour on his face, four candles to light his theatre, two ill-tuned violins, and for author any scene-painter at all, so long as he will provide the semblance of a forest, a temple, an inn, hell, or heaven, helter-skelter without formal design, like a scene in chaos. But let Deburau have his way and

out of the chaos order will emerge, as if by magic. He will make his own play out of it, a comedy a thousand times more interesting, more vivacious, more living, truer to life than the whole imperial repertoire of the *Théâtre-Français*.

It is indeed at the Tight-rope Dancers' only that you will find the unadulterated pleasure, the interest without murder, the comedy plot without tedium, the vaudeville without couplets, which the wise have so vainly sought through all this age of ours. This is the Tight-rope Dancers', a kind of El Dorado to be reached on sheep-back without peril and without fatigue. Only you must not be ashamed to practise the innocent diversion of riding horseback on a sheep!

XIII

LET us now leave our hero to himself. He has reached the pinnacle of his art; his success is complete, and so is his popularity; his name is known to the world, and what is a more difficult achievement, he knows that he has a name in the world. Without this complement human glory is not. My task is done; I shall talk to you no more of Deburau.

Yet there are some, men who demand to know all, women of tender heart who cannot endure uncertainty as to the fate of those they love; there are some who will desire to be told of the real life of this strange man, this unique citizen of Paris, this respectable husband and father, if such he be; whether he is a man of property, whether he has a wife, whether she gives him many children?

The author is too conscious of humanity's debt to man's unyielding curiosity and woman's insatiable sentiment not to add one more chapter to this book, and this despite its already great length — which nobody will deny, least of all himself.

You shall learn, then, ladies and gentlemen, all that we are able to tell you of the private life of this artist, though, we hope, without indiscretion and without making any breach in the wall enclosing his privacy as a citizen.

Deburau has become a taxpayer since the Revolution of July, and he therefore loves the Revolution, since it elevated him to that degree of importance. His home is furnished with decency; six chairs, a chest of drawers, a bed, two cradles, a bureau in which he keeps his shirt-collars, ties and gloves, when he wears any.

His wife, whose portrait is at this moment in progress for the forthcoming Salon, is pretty, bright-eyed, dark and vivid of complexion. She has given her husband four children, whose sex it is somewhat difficult to determine, but they are all joyful, active and mischievous, and play together like little cats. A delightful bevy of Pierrots, Columbines and Harlequins. Their father will not die.

Deburau is not yet a member of the National Guard.

Six months ago this winter he was invited to a lawyer's wedding. He attended in a black coat and silk stockings; he danced with the lawyers' wives, and played *Écarté* with members of the commercial world. It was a white wedding and everything was done in grand style; the candles were perfumed; there was a trout from the Lake of Geneva; the music was from Collinet's; the guests danced and waltzed till daybreak. Our hero was the hero of the occasion; no eyes, no smiles but for him. No trout but for him either, since he picked it up by its tail, finding that the guests had forgotten all about it. "Who is this gentleman? Where has he come from?" they asked one another as they observed the cavalier. And the knowing ones answered, "Sir, that gentleman is the Pierrot at the Tight-rope Dancers!" Then the ladies would train their *lorgnettes* upon him, the better to see so rare a personage.

Thus Deburau's life has encompassed everything, every reverse, every favour of fortune, all the disdain and all the adulation of society, the street and the drawing-room. Oh great man indeed!

Among people he is self-possessed and says little; he smokes a great deal of all kinds of tobacco, which he puffs forth through all kinds of orifices; he is polite and well-bred, always waiting to sit down until everyone else has taken the armchairs. By his meditative air one would take him for a commercial traveller.

Besides his talent as an artist, he has many social talents as well. He is a carpenter, a locksmith, a good shot; he can sign his name and hang a picture.

At his theatre he rules as master; he is a tyrant, capricious sometimes, autocratic always. More than once he has put the thunder out of commission, kicked a hole in the drum, mislaid scarves, punched the lover in the eye, stuffed the singer with hot galettes, cut off pigtails, stolen wigs, and caused more than one entrance to be missed. He is as ready to deliver an epigram as a kick. All this is a source of merriment to his light-hearted comrades, who adore him for his goodness of heart.

He likes beer and *échaudés*, hot wine and galettes, tea, coffee, rum, and everything else to eat and drink except eau de mélisse and coxcombs. Such are his tastes.

He loathes toadstools and mushrooms. When he hears a nightingale, he covers his ears with both hands and shouts: "Will you stop, you foul brute, you!" To each his own music and his own joys.

He has just come into a legacy.

At any rate, he is wearing a crape band on his hat.

I have said.

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN

1810-1839

By MATTHEW ARNOLD ¹ (1822-1888)



I WILL not presume to say that I now know the French language well; but at a time when I knew it even less well than at present, — some fifteen years ago, — I remember pestering those about me with this sentence, the rhythm of which had lodged itself in my head, and which, with the strangest pronunciation possible, I kept perpetually declaiming: “*Les dieux jaloux ont enfoui quelque part les témoignages de la descendance des choses; mais au bord de quel Océan ont-ils roulé la pierre qui les, couvre, ô Macarée!*”

These words come from a short composition called the *Centaure*, of which the author, Georges-Maurice de Guérin, died in the year 1839, at the age of twenty-eight without having published anything. In 1840, Madame Sand brought out the *Centaure* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, with a short notice of its author, and a few extracts from his letters. A year or two afterwards she reprinted these at the end of a volume of her novels; and there it was that I fell in with them. I was so much struck with the *Centaure* that I waited anxiously to hear something more of its author, and of what he had left; but it was not till the other day — twenty years after the first publication of the *Centaure* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, that my anxiety was satisfied. At the end of 1860 appeared two volumes with the title *Maurice de Guérin, Reliquiæ*, containing the *Centaure*, several poems of Guérin, his journals, and a number of his letters, collected and edited by a devoted friend, M. Trebutien, and preceded by a notice of Guérin by the first of living critics, M. Sainte-Beuve.

The grand power of poetry is its interpretative power; by which I mean, not a power of drawing out in black and white an explanation of the mystery of the universe, but the power of so dealing with things as to awaken in us a wonderfully full, new, and intimate sense of them, and of our relations with them. When this sense is awakened in us, as to objects without us, we feel ourselves to be in contact with the essential nature of those objects, to be no longer bewildered and oppressed by them, but to have their secret, and to be in harmony with them; and this feeling calms and satisfies us as no other can. Poetry, indeed, interprets in another

¹ Reprinted from *Essays in Criticism*. It first appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, London, 1863. A few footnotes have been omitted.

way besides this; but one of its two ways of interpreting, of exercising its highest power, is by awakening this sense in us. I will not now inquire whether this sense is illusive, whether it can be proved not to be illusive, whether it does absolutely make us possess the real nature of things; all I say is, that poetry can awaken it in us, and that to awaken it is one of the highest powers of poetry. The interpretations of science do not give us this intimate sense of objects as the interpretations of poetry give it; they appeal to a limited faculty, and not to the whole man. It is not Linnæus or Cavendish or Cuvier who gives us the true sense of animals, or water, or plants, who seizes their secret for us, who makes us participate in their life; it is Shakspeare, with his

“*daffodils*

*That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March of beauty”;*

it is Wordsworth, with his

“*voice . . . heard*

*In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides”;*

it is Keats, with his

“*moving waters at their priestlike task
Of cold ablution round Earth’s human shores”;*

it is Chateaubriand, with his, “*cîme indéterminée des forêts*”; it is Senancour, with his mountain birch-tree: “*Cette écorce blanche, lisse et crevassée; cette tige agreste; ces branches qui s’inclinent vers la terre; la mobilité des feuilles, et tout cet abandon, simplicité de la nature, attitude des déserts.*”

Eminent manifestations of this magical power of poetry are very rare and very precious: the compositions of Guérin manifest it, I think, in singular eminence. Not his poems, strictly so called, — his verse, — so much as his prose; his poems in general take for their vehicle that favourite metre of French poetry, the Alexandrine; and, in my judgment, I confess they have thus, as compared with his prose, a great disadvantage to start with. In prose, the character of the vehicle for the composer’s thoughts is not determined beforehand; every composer has to make his own vehicle; and who has ever done this more admirably than the great prose-writers of France, — Pascal, Bossuet, Fénelon, Voltaire? But in verse the composer has (with comparatively narrow liberty of modification) to accept his vehicle ready-made; it is therefore of vital importance to him that he should find at his disposal a vehicle adequate to convey the highest matters of poetry. We may even get a decisive test of the

poetical power of a language and nation by ascertaining how far the principal poetical vehicle which they have employed, how far (in plainer words) the established national metre for high poetry, is adequate or inadequate. It seems to me that the established metre of this kind in France, — the Alexandrine, — is inadequate; that as a vehicle for high poetry it is greatly inferior to the hexameter or to the iambics of Greece (for example), or to the blank verse of England. Therefore the man of genius who uses it is at a disadvantage as compared with the man of genius who has for conveying his thoughts a more adequate vehicle, metrical or not. Racine is at a disadvantage as compared with Sophocles or Shakspeare, and he is likewise at a disadvantage as compared with Bossuet. The same may be said of our own poets of the eighteenth century, a century which gave them as the main vehicle for their high poetry a metre inadequate (as much as the French Alexandrine, and nearly in the same way) for this poetry, — the ten-syllable couplet. It is worth remarking, that the English poet of the eighteenth century whose compositions wear best and give one the most entire satisfaction, — Gray, — hardly uses that couplet at all: this abstinence, however, limits Gray's productions to a few short compositions, and (exquisite as these are) he is a poetical nature repressed and without free issue. For English poetical production on a great scale, for an English poet deploying all the forces of his genius, the ten-syllable couplet was, in the eighteenth century, the established, one may almost say the inevitable, channel. Now this couplet, admirable (as Chaucer uses it) for story-telling not of the epic pitch, and often admirable for a few lines even in poetry of a very high pitch, is for continuous use in poetry of this latter kind inadequate. Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, is thus at a disadvantage compared with Lucretius in his poem on Nature: Lucretius has an adequate vehicle, Pope has not. Nay, though Pope's genius for didactic poetry was not less than that of Horace, while his satirical power was certainly greater, still one's taste receives, I cannot but think, a certain satisfaction when one reads the Epistle and Satires of Horace, which it fails to receive when one reads the Satires and Epistles of Pope. Of such avail is the superior adequacy of the vehicle used to compensate even an inferiority of genius in the user! In the same way Pope is at a disadvantage as compared with Addison: the best of Addison's composition (the "Cov-erley Papers" in the *Spectator*, for instance) wears better than the best of Pope's, because Addison has in his prose an intrinsically better vehicle for his genius than Pope in his couplet. But Bacon has no such advantage over Shakspeare; nor has Milton, writing prose (for no contemporary English prose-writer must be matched with Milton except Milton himself), any such advantage over Milton writing verse: indeed, the advantage here is all the other way.

It is in the prose remains of Guérin, — his journals, his letters, and the striking composition which I have already mentioned, the *Centaur*, —

that his extraordinary gift manifests itself. He has a truly interpretative faculty; the most profound and delicate sense of the life of Nature, and the most exquisite felicity in finding expressions to render that sense. Brief notices of him the reader may have seen here and there in English or in foreign periodicals; but it is not likely that the two volumes of his remains will have met the eye of more than a very few of those who read this or that they will ever be widely circulated in this country. To all who love poetry, Guérin deserves to be something more than a name; and I shall try, in spite of the impossibility of doing justice to such a master of expression by translations, to make my English readers see for themselves how gifted an organization his was, and how few artists have received from Nature a more magical faculty of interpreting her.

In the winter of the year 1832 there was collected in Brittany, around the well known Abbé Lamennais, a singular gathering. At a lonely place, La Chênaie, he had founded a religious retreat, to which disciples, attracted by his powers or by his reputation, repaired. Some came with the intention of preparing themselves for the ecclesiastical profession; others merely to profit by the society and discourse of so distinguished a master. Among the inmates were men whose names have since become known to all Europe, — Lacordaire and M. de Montalembert; there were others, who have acquired a reputation, not European, indeed, but considerable, — the Abbé Gerbet, the Abbé Rohrbacher; others, who have never quitted the shade of private life. The winter of 1832 was a period of crisis in the religious world of France: Lamennais's rupture with Rome, the condemnation of his opinions by the Pope, and his revolt against that condemnation, were imminent. Some of his followers, like Lacordaire, had already resolved not to cross the Rubicon with their leader, not to go into rebellion against Rome; they were preparing to separate from him. The Society of La Chênaie was soon to dissolve; but, such as it is shown to us for a moment, with its voluntary character, its simple and severe life in common, its mixture of lay and clerical members, the genius of its chiefs, the sincerity of its disciples, — above all, its paramount fervent interest in matters of spiritual and religious concernment, — it offers a most instructive spectacle. It is not the spectacle we most of us think to find in France, the France we have imagined from common English notions, from the streets of Paris, from novels; it shows us how, wherever there is greatness like that of France, there are, as its foundation, treasures of fervour, pure-mindedness, and spirituality somewhere, whether we know of them or not; — a store of that which Goethe calls *Halt*; — since greatness can never be founded upon frivolity and corruption.

On the evening of the 18th of December in this year 1832, M. de Lamennais was talking to those assembled in the sitting-room of La Chênaie of his recent journey to Italy. He talked with all his usual animation;

"but," writes one of his hearers, a Breton gentleman, M. de Marzan, "I soon became inattentive and absent, being struck with the reserved attitude of a young stranger some twenty-two years old, pale in face, his black hair already thin over his temples, with a southern eye, in which brightness and melancholy were mingled. He kept himself somewhat aloof, seeming to avoid notice rather than to court it. All the old faces of friends which I found about me at this, my re-entry into the circle of La Chênaie, failed to occupy me so much as the sight of this stranger, looking on, listening, observing, and saying nothing."

The unknown was Maurice de Guérin. Of a noble but poor family, having lost his mother at six years old, he had been brought up by his father, a man saddened by his wife's death, and austere religious, at the château of Le Cayla, in Languedoc. His childhood was not gay; he had not the society of other boys; and solitude, the sight of his father's gloom, and the habit of accompanying the *curé* of the parish on his rounds among the sick and dying, made him prematurely grave and familiar with sorrow. He went to school first in Toulouse, then at the College of Stanislas at Paris, with a temperament almost as unfit as Shelley's for common school life. His youth was ardent, sensitive, agitated, and unhappy. In 1832 he procured admission to La Chênaie to brace his spirit by the teaching of Lamennais, and to decide whether his religious feelings would determine themselves into a distinct religious vocation. Strong and deep religious feelings, he had, implanted in him by nature, developed in him by the circumstances of his childhood; but he had also (and here is the key to his character) that temperament which opposes itself to the fixedness of a religious vocation, or to any vocation of which fixedness is an essential attribute—a temperament mobile, inconstant, eager, thirsting for new impressions, abhorring rules, aspiring to a "renovation without end"; a temperament common enough among artists, but with which few artists, who have it to the same degree as Guérin, unite a seriousness and a sad intensity like his. After leaving school, and before going to La Chênaie, he had been at home at Le Cayla with his sister Eugénie (a wonderfully gifted person, whose genius so competent a judge as M. Sainte-Beuve is inclined to pronounce even superior to her brother's) and his sister Eugénie's friends. With one of these friends he had fallen in love,—a slight and transient fancy, but which had already called his poetical powers into exercise; and his poems and fragments, in a certain green note-book (*le Cahier Vert*) which he long continued to make the depository of his thoughts, and which became famous among his friends, he brought with him to La Chênaie. There he found among the younger members of the Society several who, like himself, had a secret passion for poetry and literature; with these he became intimate, and in his letters and journal we find him occupied, now with a literary commerce established with these friends, now with the fortunes, fast coming to

a crisis, of the Society, and now with that for the sake of which he came to La Chênaie, — his religious progress and the state of his soul.

On Christmas-day, 1832, having been then three weeks at La Chênaie, he writes thus of it to a friend of his family, M. de Bayne:

“La Chênaie is a sort of oasis in the midst of the steppes of Brittany. In front of the château stretches a very large garden cut in two by a terrace with a lime avenue, at the end of which is a tiny chapel. I am extremely fond of this little oratory, where one breathes a twofold peace, — the peace of solitude and the peace of the Lord. When spring comes we shall walk to prayers between two borders of flowers. On the east side, and only a few yards from the château, sleeps a small mere between two woods, where the birds in warm weather sing all day long; and then, — right, left, on all sides, — woods, woods, everywhere woods. It looks desolate just now that all is bare and the woods are rust-colour, and under this Brittany sky, which is always clouded and so low that it seems as if it were going to fall on your head; but as soon as spring comes the sky raises itself up, the woods come to life again, and everything will be full of charm.”

Of what La Chênaie will be when spring comes he has a foretaste on the 3rd of March.

“Today” (he writes in his journal) “has enchanted me. For the first time for a long while the sun has shown himself in all his beauty. He has made the buds of the leaves and flowers swell, and he has waked up in me a thousand happy thoughts. The clouds assume more and more their light and graceful shapes, and are sketching, over the blue sky, the most charming fancies. The woods have not yet got their leaves, but they are taking an indescribable air of life and gaiety, which gives them quite a new physiognomy. Everything is getting ready for the great festival of Nature.”

Storm and snow adjourn this festival a little longer. On the 11th of March he writes:

“It has snowed all night. I have been to look at our primroses; each of them has its small load of snow, and was bowing its head under its burden. These pretty flowers, with their rich yellow colour, had a charming effect under their white hoods. I saw whole tufts of them roofed over by a single block of snow; all these laughing flowers thus shrouded and leaning one upon another, made one think of a group of young girls surprised by a wave, and sheltering under a white cloth.”

The burst of spring comes at last, though late. On the 5th of April we find Guérin “sitting in the sun to penetrate himself to the very marrow with the divine spring.” On the 3rd of May, “one can actually *see* the progress of the green; it has made a start from the garden to the shrubberies, it is getting the upper hand all along the mere; it leaps, one may say, from tree to tree, from thicket to thicket, in the fields and on the hill-sides; and I can see it already arrived at the forest edge and beginning to

spread itself over the broad back of the forest. Soon it will have over-run everything as far as the eye can reach, and all those wide spaces between here and the horizon will be moving and sounding like one vast sea, a sea of emerald."

Finally, on the 16th of May, he writes to M. de Bayne that "the gloomy and bad days, — bad because they bring temptation by their gloom, — are, thanks to God and the spring, over; and I see approaching a long file of shining and happy days, to do me all the good in the world. This Brittany of ours," he continues, "gives one the idea of the grayest and most wrinkled old woman possible suddenly changed back by the touch of a fairy's wand into a girl of twenty, and one of the loveliest in the world; the fine weather has so decked and beautified the dear old country." He felt, however, the cloudiness and cold of the "dear old country" with all the sensitiveness of a child of the south. "What a difference," he cries, "between the sky of Brittany, even on the finest day, and the sky of our South! Here the summer has, even on its high days and holidays, something mournful, overcast, and stinted about it. It is like a miser who is making a show; there is a niggardliness in his magnificence. Give me our Languedoc sky, so bountiful of light, so blue, so largely vaulted!" And somewhat later, complaining of the short and dim sunlight of a February day in Paris, "What a sunshine," he exclaims, "to gladden eyes accustomed to all the wealth of light of the South! — *aux larges et libérales effusions de lumière du ciel du Midi.*"

In the long winter of La Chênaie his great resource was literature. One has often heard that an educated Frenchman's reading seldom goes much beyond French and Latin, and that he makes the authors in these two languages his sole literary standard. This may or may not be true of Frenchmen in general, but there can be no question as to the width of the reading of Guérin and his friends, and as to the range of their literary sympathies. One of the circle, Hippolyte la Morvonnais, — a poet who published a volume of verse, and died in the prime of life, — had a passionate admiration for Wordsworth, and had even, it is said, made a pilgrimage to Rydal Mount to visit him; and in Guérin's own reading I find, besides the French names of Bernardin, de St Pierre, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, and Victor Hugo, the names of Homer, Dante, Shakspere, Milton, and Goethe; and he quotes both from Greek and from English authors in the original. His literary tact is beautifully fine and true. "Every poet," he writes to his sister, "has his own art of poetry written on the ground of his own soul; there is no other. Be constantly observing Nature in her smallest details, and then write as the current of your thoughts guides you; — that is all." But with all this freedom from the bondage of forms and rules, Guérin marks with perfect precision the faults of the *free* French literature of his time, — the *littérature facile*, — and judges the romantic school and its prospects like a master: "that youthful literature which has put forth all

its blossom prematurely, and has left itself a helpless prey to the returning frost, stimulated as it has been by the burning sun of our century, by this atmosphere charged with a perilous heat, which has over-hastened every sort of development, and will most likely reduce to a handful of grains the harvest of our age." And the popular authors, — those "whose name appears once and disappears for ever, whose books, unwelcome to all serious people, welcome to the rest of the world, to novelty-hunters and novel-readers, fill with vanity these vain souls, and then, falling from hands heavy with the langour of satiety, drop for ever into the gulf of oblivion"; and those, more noteworthy, "the writers of books celebrated, and, as works of art, deserving celebrity, but which have in them not one grain of that hidden manna, not one of those sweet and wholesome thoughts which nourish the human soul and refresh it when it is weary," — these he treats with such severity that he may in some sense be described, as he describes himself, as "invoking with his whole heart a classical restoration." He is best described, however, not as a partisan of any school, but as an ardent seeker for that mode of expression which is the most natural, happy, and true. He writes to his sister Eugénie: —

"I want you to reform your system of composition; it is too loose, too vague, too Lamartinian. Your verse is too sing-song; it does not *talk* enough. Form for yourself a style of your own, which shall be your real expression. Study the French language by attentive reading, making it your care to remark constructions, turns of expression, delicacies of style, but without ever adopting the manner of any master. In the works of these masters we must learn our language, but we must use it each in our own fashion."

It was not, however, to perfect his literary judgment that Guérin came to La Chênaie. The religious feeling, which was as much a part of his essence as the passion for Nature and the literary instinct, shows itself at moments jealous of these its rivals, and alarmed at their predominance. Like all powerful feelings, it wants to exclude every other feeling and to be absolute. One Friday in April, after he has been delighting himself with the shapes of the clouds and the progress of the spring, he suddenly be-thinks himself that the day is Good Friday, and exclaims in his diary: —

"My God, what is my soul about that it can thus go running after such fugitive delights on Good Friday, on this day all filled with Thy death and our redemption. There is in me I know not what damnable spirit, that awakens in me strong discontents, and is for ever prompting me to rebel against the holy exercises and the devout collectedness of soul which are the meet preparation for these great solemnities of our faith. Oh how well can I trace here the old leaven, from which I have not yet perfectly cleared my soul!"

And again, in a letter to M. de Marzan: "Of what, my God, are we made," he cries, "that a little verdure and a few trees should be enough

to rob us of our tranquillity and to distract us from Thy love?" And writing, three days after Easter Sunday, in his journal, he records the reception at La Chênaie of a fervent neophyte, in words which seem to convey a covert blame of his own want of fervency: —

"Three days have passed over our heads since the great festival. One anniversary the less for us yet to spend of the death and resurrection of our Saviour! Every year thus bears away with it its solemn festivals; when will the everlasting festival be here? I have been witness of a most touching sight; François has brought us one of his friends whom he has gained to the faith. This neophyte joined us in our exercises during the Holy week, and on Easter day he received the communion with us. François was in raptures. It is a truly good work which he has thus done. François is quite young, hardly twenty years old; M. de la M. is thirty, and is married. There is something most touching and beautifully simple in M. de la M. letting himself thus be brought to God by quite a young man; and to see friendship, on François's side, thus doing the work of an Apostle, is not less beautiful and touching."

Admiration for Lamennais worked in the same direction with this feeling. Lamennais never appreciated Guérin; his combative, rigid, despotic nature, of which the characteristic was energy, had no affinity with Guérin's elusive, undulating, impalpable nature, of which the characteristic was delicacy. He set little store by his new disciple, and could hardly bring himself to understand what others found so remarkable in him, his own genuine feeling towards him being one of indulgent compassion. But the intuition of Guérin, more discerning than the logic of his master, instinctively felt what there was commanding and tragic in Lamennais's character, different as this was from his own; and some of his notes are among the most interesting records of Lamennais which remain.

" 'Do you know what it is,' M. Féli said to us on the evening of the day before yesterday, 'which makes man the most suffering of all creatures? It is that he has one foot in the finite and the other in the infinite, and that he is torn asunder, not by four horses, as in the horrible old times, but between two worlds.' Again he said to us as we heard the clock strike: 'if that clock knew that it was to be destroyed the next instant, it would still keep striking its hour until that instant arrived. My children, be as the clock; whatever may be going to happen to you, strike always your hour.' "

Another time Guérin writes:

"Today M. Féli startled us. He was sitting behind the chapel, under the two Scotch firs; he took his stick and marked out a grave on the turf, and said to Elie, 'It is there I wish to be buried, but no tombstone! only a simple hillock of grass. Oh, how well I shall be there!' Elie thought he had a presentiment that his end was near. This is not the first time he has been visited by such a presentiment; when he was setting out for Rome,

he said to those here: 'I do not expect ever to come back to you; you must do the good which I have failed to do.' He is impatient for death."

Overpowered by the ascendancy of Lamennais, Guérin, in spite of his hesitations, in spite of his confession to himself that, "after three weeks' close scrutiny of his soul, in the hope of finding the pearl of a religious vocation hidden in some corner of it," he had failed to find what he sought, took, at the end of August 1833, a decisive step. He joined the religious order which Lamennais had founded. But at this very moment the deepening displeasure of Rome with Lamennais determined the Bishop of Rennes to break up, in so far as it was a religious congregation, the Society of La Chênaie, to transfer the novices to Ploërmel, and to place them under other superintendence. In September, Lamennais, "who had not yet ceased," writes M. de Marzan, a fervent Catholic, "to be a Christian and a priest, took leave of his beloved colony of La Chênaie, with the anguish of a general who disbands his army down to the last recruit, and withdraws annihilated from the field of battle." Guérin went to Ploërmel. But here, in the seclusion of a real religious house, he instantly perceived how alien to a spirit like his, — a spirit which, as he himself says somewhere, "had need of the open air, wanted to see the sun and the flowers," — was the constraint and monotony of a monastic life, when Lamennais's genius was no longer present to enliven this life for him. On the 7th of October he renounced the novitiate, believing himself a partisan of Lamennais in his quarrel with Rome, reproaching the life he had left with demanding passive obedience instead of trying "to put in practice the admirable alliance of order with liberty, and of variety with unity," and declaring that, for his part, he preferred taking the chances of a life of adventure to submitting himself to be "*garotté par un règlement*, — tied hand and foot by a set of rules." In real truth, a life of adventure, or rather a life free to wander at its own will, was that to which his nature irresistibly impelled him.

For a career of adventure, the inevitable field was Paris. But before this career began, there came a stage, the smoothest, perhaps, and the most happy in the short life of Guérin. M. la Morvonnais, one of his La Chênaie friends, — some years older than Guérin, and married to a wife of singular sweetness and charm, — had a house by the seaside at the mouth of one of the beautiful rivers of Brittany, the Arguenon. He asked Guérin, when he left Ploërmel, to come and stay with him at this place, called Le Val de l'Arguenon, and Guérin spent the winter of 1833-4 there. I grudge every word about Le Val and its inmates which is not Guérin's own, so charming is the picture he draws of them, so truly does his talent find itself in its best vein as he draws it.

"How full of goodness" (he writes in his journal of the 7th of December) "is Providence to me! For fear the sudden passage from the mild and temperate air of a religious life to the torrid clime of the world

should be too trying for my soul, it has conducted me, after I have left my sacred shelter, to a house planted on the frontier between the two regions, where, without being in solitude, one is not yet in the world; a house whose windows look on the one side towards the plain where the tumult of men is rocking, on the other towards the wilderness where the servants of God are chanting. I intend to write down the record of my sojourn here, for the days here spent are full of happiness, and I know that in the time to come I shall often turn back to the story of these past felicities. A man, pious, and a poet; a woman, whose spirit is in such perfect sympathy with his that you would say they had but one being between them; a child, called Marie like her mother, and who sends, like a star, the first rays of her love and thought through the white cloud of infancy; a simple life in an old-fashioned house; the ocean, which comes morning and evening to bring us its harmonies; and lastly, a wanderer who descends from Carmel and is going on to Babylon, and who has laid down at this threshold his staff and his sandals, to take his seat at the hospitable table; — here is matter to make a biblical poem of, if I could only describe things as I can feel them! ”

Every line written by Guérin during this stay at Le Val is worth quoting, but I have only room for one extract more: —

“Never” (he writes, a fortnight later, on the 20th of December), “never have I tasted so inwardly and deeply the happiness of home-life. All the little details of this life, which in their succession make up the day, are to me so many stages of a continuous charm carried from one end of the day to the other. The morning greeting, which in some sort renews the pleasure of the first arrival, for the words with which one meets are almost the same, and the separation at night, through the hours of darkness and uncertainty, does not ill represent longer separations; then breakfast, during which you have the fresh enjoyment of having met together again; the stroll afterwards, when we go out and bid Nature good-morning; the return and setting to work in an old panelled chamber looking out on the sea, inaccessible to all the stir of the house, a perfect sanctuary of labour; dinner, to which we are called, not by a bell, which reminds one too much of school or a great house, but by a pleasant voice; the gaiety, the merriment, the talk flitting from one subject to another and never dropping so long as the meal lasts; the crackling fire of dry branches to which we draw our chairs directly afterwards, the kind words that are spoken round the warm flame which sings while we talk; and then, if it is fine, the walk by the seaside, when the sea has for its visitors a mother with her child in her arms, this child’s father and a stranger, each of these two last with a stick in his hand; the rosy lips of the little girl, which keep talking at the same time with the waves,—now and then tears shed by her and cries of childish fright at the edge of the sea; our thoughts, the father’s and mine, as we stand and look at the mother and child smiling at one another,

or at the child in tears and the mother trying to comfort it by her caresses and exhortations; the Ocean, going on all the while rolling up his waves and noises; the dead boughs which we go and cut, here and there, out of the copse-wood, to make a quick and bright fire when we get home, — this little taste of the woodman's calling which brings us closer to Nature and makes us think of M. Féli's eager fondness for the same work; the hours of study and poetical flow which carry us to supper-time; this meal, which summons us by the same gentle voice as its predecessor, and which is passed amid the same joys, only less loud, because evening sobers everything, tones everything down; then our evening, ushered in by the blaze of a cheerful fire, and which with its alternations of reading and talking brings us at last to bed-time: — to all the charms of a day so spent add the dreams which follow it, and your imagination will still fall far short of these home-joys in their delightful reality."

I said the foregoing should be my last extract, but who could resist this picture of a January evening on the coast of Brittany? —

"All the sky is covered over with grey clouds just silvered at the edges. The sun, who departed a few minutes ago, has left behind him enough light to temper for awhile the black shadows, and to soften down, as it were, the approach of night. The winds are hushed, and the tranquil Ocean sends up to me, when I go out on the doorstep to listen, only a melodious murmur, which dies away in the soul like a beautiful wave on the beach. The birds, the first to obey the nocturnal influence, make their way towards the woods, and you hear the rustle of their wings in the clouds. The cospes which cover the whole hill-side of Le Val, which all the day-time are alive with the chirp of the wren, the laughing whistle of the woodpecker, and the different notes of a multitude of birds, have no longer any sound in their paths and thickets, unless it be the prolonged high call of the blackbirds at play with one another and chasing one another, after all the other birds have their heads safe under their wings. The noise of man, always the last to be silent, dies gradually out over the face of the fields. The general murmur fades away, and one hears hardly a sound except what comes from the villages and hamlets, in which, up till far into the night, there are cries of children and barking of dogs. Silence wraps me round; everything seeks repose except this pen of mine, which perhaps disturbs the rest of some living atom asleep in a crease of my note-book, for it makes its light scratching as it puts down these idle thoughts. Let it stop, then! for all I write, have written, or shall write, will never be worth setting against the sleep of an atom."

On the 1st of February we find him in a lodging at Paris. "I enter the world" (such are the last words written in his journal at Le Val) "with a secret horror." His outward history for the next five years is soon told. He found himself in Paris, poor, fastidious, and with health which already, no doubt, felt the obscure presence of the malady of which

he died — consumption. One of his Brittany acquaintances introduced him to editors, tried to engage him in the periodical literature of Paris; and so unmistakable was Guérin's talent that even his first essays were immediately accepted. But Guérin's genius was of a kind which unfitted him to get his bread in this manner. At first he was pleased with the notion of living by his pen; "*je n'ai qu'à écrire*," he says to his sister, — "I have only got to write." But to a nature like his, endued with the passion for perfection, the necessity to produce, to produce constantly, to produce whether in the vein or out of the vein, to produce something good or bad or middling, as it may happen, but at all events *something*, — is the most intolerable of tortures. To escape from it he betook himself to that common but most perfidious refuge of men of letters, that refuge to which Goldsmith and poor Hartley Coleridge had betaken themselves before him, — the profession of teaching. In September 1834 he procured an engagement at the Collège Stanislas, where he had himself been educated. It was vacation-time, and all he had to do was to teach a small class composed of boys who did not go home for the holidays, — in his own words, "scholars left like sick sheep in the fold, while the rest of the flock are frisking in the fields." After the vacation he was kept on at the college as a supernumerary. "The master of the fifth class has asked for a month's leave of absence; I am taking his place, and by this work I get one hundred francs (£4). I have been looking about for pupils to give private lessons to, and I have found three or four. Schoolwork and private lessons together fill my day from half-past seven in the morning till half-past nine at night. The college dinner serves me for breakfast, and I go and dine in the evening at twenty-four *sous*, as a young man beginning life should." To better his position in the hierarchy of public teachers it was necessary that he should take the degree of *agrégé èslettres*, corresponding to our degree of Master of Arts; and to his heavy work in teaching, there was thus added that of preparing for a severe examination. The drudgery of this life was very irksome to him, although less insupportable than the drudgery of the profession of letters; inasmuch as to a sensitive man like Guérin, to silence his genius is more tolerable than to hackney it. Still the yoke wore him deeply, and he had moments of bitter revolt; he continued, however, to bear it with resolution, and on the whole with patience, for four years. On the 15th of November 1838 he married a young Creole lady of some fortune, Mademoiselle Caroline de Gervain, "whom," to use his own words, "Destiny, who loves these surprises, has wafted from the farthest Indies into my arms." The marriage was happy, and it ensured to Guérin liberty and leisure; but now "the blind Fury with the abhorred shears" was hard at hand. Consumption declared itself in him: "I pass my life," he writes, with his old playfulness and calm, to his sister on the 8th of April 1839, "within my bed-curtains, and wait patiently enough, thanks to Caro's goodness, books, and dreams, for the recovery which the sunshine is to

bring with it." In search of this sunshine he was taken to his native country, Languedoc, but in vain. He died at Le Cayla on the 19th of July 1839.

The vicissitudes of his inward life during these five years were more considerable. His opinions and tastes underwent great, or what seem to be great, changes. He came to Paris the ardent partisan of Lamennais: even in April 1834, after Rome had finally condemned Lamennais, — "Tonight there will go forth from Paris," he writes, "with his face set to the East, a man whose every step I would fain follow, and who returns to the desert for which I sigh. M. Féli departs this evening for La Chénaie." But in October 1835, — "I assure you," he writes to his sister, "I am at last weaned from M. de Lamennais; one does not remain a babe and suckling for ever; I am perfectly freed from his influence." There was a greater change than this. In 1834 the main cause of Guérin's aversion to the literature of the French romantic school, was that this literature, having had a religious origin, had ceased to be religious: "it has forgotten," he says, "the house and the admonitions of its Father." But his friend M. de Marzan tells us of a "deplorable revolution" which, by 1836, had taken place in him. Guérin had become intimate with the chiefs of this very literature; he no longer went to church; "the bond of a common faith, in which our friendship had its birth, existed between us no longer." Then, again, "this interregnum was not destined to last." Reconverted to his old faith by suffering and by the pious efforts of his sister Engénie, Guérin died a Catholic. His feelings about society underwent a like change. After "entering the world with a secret horror," after congratulating himself when he had been some months at Paris on being "disengaged from the social tumult, out of the reach of those blows which, when I live in the thick of the world, bruise me, irritate me, or utterly crush me," M. Sainte-Beuve tells us of him, two years afterwards, appearing in Society "man of the world, elegant, even fashionable; a talker who could hold his own against the most brilliant talkers of Paris."

In few natures, however, is there really such essential consistency as in Guérin's. He says of himself, in the very beginning of his journal: "I owe everything to poetry, for there is no other name to give to the sum total of my thoughts; I owe to it whatever I now have pure, lofty, and solid in my soul; I owe to it all my consolations in the past; I shall probably owe to it my future." Poetry, the poetical instinct, was indeed the basis of his nature; but to say so thus absolutely is not quite enough. One aspect of poetry fascinated Guérin's imagination and held it prisoner. Poetry is the interpretess of the natural world, and she is the interpretess of the moral world; it was as the interpretess of the natural world that she had Guérin for her mouthpiece. To make magically near and real the life of Nature, and man's life only so far as it is a part of that Nature, was his faculty;

a faculty of naturalistic, not of moral interpretation. This faculty always has for its basis a peculiar temperament, an extraordinary delicacy of organization and susceptibility to impressions; in exercising it the poet is in a great degree passive (Wordsworth thus speaks of a *wise passiveness*); he aspires to be a sort of human Æolian harp, catching and rendering every rustle of Nature. To assist at the evolution of the whole life of the world is his craving, and intimately to feel it all:

. . . "the glow, the thrill of life,
Where, where do these abound?"

is what he asks: he resists being riveted and held stationary by any single impression, but would be borne on for ever down an enchanted stream. He goes into religion and out of religion, into society and out of society, not from the motives which impel men in general, but to feel what it is all like; he is thus hardly a moral agent, and, like the passive and ineffectual Uranus of Keats's poem, he may say:

. "I am but a voice;
My life is but the life of winds and tides;
No more than winds and tides can I avail."

He hovers over the tumult of life, but does not really put his hand to it.

No one has expressed the aspirations of this temperament better than Guérin himself. In the last year of his life he writes: —

"I return, as you see, to my old brooding over the world of Nature, that line which my thoughts irresistibly take; a sort of passion which gives me enthusiasm, tears, bursts of joy, and an eternal food for musing; and yet I am neither philosopher nor naturalist, nor anything learned whatsoever. There is one word which is the God of my imagination, the tyrant, I ought rather to say, that fascinates it, lures it onward, gives it work to do without ceasing, and will finally carry it I know not where; the word *life*."

And in one place in his journal he says: —

"My imagination welcomes every dream, every impression, without attaching itself to any, and goes on for ever seeking something new."

And again in another: —

"The longer I live, and the clearer I discern between true and false in society, the more does the inclination to live, not as a savage or a misanthrope, but as a solitary man on the frontiers of society, on the outskirts of the world, gain strength and grow in me. The birds come and go and make nests around our habitations, they are fellow-citizens of our farms and hamlets with us; but they take their flight in a heaven which is boundless, but the hand of God alone gives and measures to them their daily food, but they build their nests in the heart of the thick bushes,

or hang them in the height of the trees. So would I, too, live, hovering round society, and having always at my back a field of liberty vast as the sky."

In the same spirit he longed for travel. "When one is a wanderer," he writes to his sister, "one feels that one fulfils the true condition of humanity." And the last entry in his journal is, — "The stream of travel is full of delight. Oh, who will set me adrift on this Nile!"

Assuredly it is not in this temperament that the active virtues have their rise. On the contrary, this temperament, considered in itself alone, indisposes for the discharge of them. Something morbid and excessive, as manifested in Guérin, it undoubtedly has. In him, as in Keats, and as in another youth of genius, whose name, but the other day unheard of, is henceforth written in the history of English poetry — David Gray — the temperament, the talent itself, is deeply influenced by their mysterious malady; the temperament is *devouring*; it uses vital power too hard and too fast, paying the penalty in long hours of unutterable exhaustion and in premature death. The intensity of Guérin's depression is described to us by Guérin himself with the same incomparable touch with which he describes happier feelings; far oftener than any pleasurable sense of his gift he has "the sense profound, near, immense, of my misery, of my inward poverty." And again: "My inward misery gains upon me; I no longer dare look within." And on another day of gloom he does look within, and here is the terrible analysis: —

"Craving, unquiet, seeing only by glimpses, my spirit is stricken by all those ills which are the sure fruit of a youth doomed never to ripen into manhood. I grow old and wear myself out in the most futile mental strainings, and make no progress. My head seems dying, and when the wind blows I fancy I feel it, as if I were a tree, blowing through a number of withered branches in my top. Study is intolerable to me, or rather it is quite out of my power. Mental work brings on, not drowsiness, but an irritable and nervous disgust which drives me out, I know not where, into the streets and public places. The Spring, whose delights used to come every year stealthily and mysteriously to charm me in my retreat, crushes me this year under a weight of sudden hotness. I should be glad of any event which delivered me from the situation in which I am. If I were free I would embark for some distant country where I could begin life anew."

Such is this temperament in the frequent hours when the sense of its own weakness and isolation crushes it to the ground. Certainly it was not for Guérin's happiness, or for Keats's, as men count happiness, to be as they were. Still the very excess and predominance of their temperament has given to the fruits of their genius a unique brilliancy and flavour. I have said that poetry interprets in two ways; it interprets by expressing with magical felicity the physiognomy and movement of the outward world, and it interprets by expressing, with inspired conviction, the ideas and laws of the inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature. In other words, poetry is interpretative both by having *natural* magic in it, and by

having *moral profundity*. In both ways it illuminates man; it gives him a satisfying sense of reality; it reconciles him with himself and the universe. Thus Æschylus's "δράσαντι παθεῖν" and his "ἀνθρώπου γέλασμα" are alike interpretative. Shakspeare interprets both when he says,

*"Full many a glorious morning have I seen,
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovran eye";*

and when he says,

*"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them as we will."*

These great poets unite in themselves the faculty of both kinds of interpretation, the naturalistic and the moral. But it is observable that in the poets who unite both kinds, the latter (the moral) usually ends by making itself the master. In Shakspeare the two kinds seem wonderfully to balance one another; but even in him the balance leans; his expression tends to become too little sensuous and simple, too much intellectualized. The same thing may be yet more strongly affirmed of Lucretius and of Wordsworth. In Shelley there is not a balance of the two gifts, nor even a co-existence of them, but there is a passionate straining after them both, and this is what makes Shelley, as a man, so interesting: I will not now inquire how much Shelley achieves as a poet, but whatever he achieves, he in general fails to achieve natural magic in his expression; in Mr. Palgrave's charming Treasury may be seen a gallery of his failures. But in Keats and Guérin, in whom the faculty of naturalistic interpretation is overpoweringly predominant, the natural magic is perfect; when they speak of the world they speak like Adam naming by divine inspiration the creatures; their expression corresponds with the thing's essential reality. Even between Keats and Guérin, however, there is a distinction to be drawn. Keats has, above all, a sense of what is pleasurable and open in the life of nature; for him she is the *Alma Parens*: his expression has, therefore, more than Guérin's, something genial, outward, and sensuous. Guérin has, above all, a sense of what there is adorable and secret in the life of Nature; for him she is the *Magna Parens*; his expression has, therefore, more than Keats's, something mystic, inward, and profound.

So he lived like a man possessed; with his eye not on his own career, not on the public, not on fame, but on the Isis whose evil he had uplifted. He published nothing: "There is more power and beauty," he writes, "in the well-kept secret of one's-self and one's thoughts, than in the display of a whole heaven that one may have inside one." "My spirit," he answers the friends who urge him to write, "is of the home-keeping order, and has no fancy for adventure; literary adventure is above all distasteful to it; for this, indeed (let me say so without the least self-sufficiency), it has a contempt. The literary career seems to me unreal, both in its own

essence and in the rewards which one seeks from it, and therefore fatally marred by a secret absurdity." His acquaintances, and among them distinguished men of letters, full of admiration for the originality and delicacy of his talent, laughed at his self-depreciation, warmly assured him of his powers. He received their assurances with a mournful incredulity, which contrasts curiously with the self-assertion of poor David Gray, whom I just now mentioned. "It seems to me intolerable," he writes, "to appear to men other than one appears to God. My worst torture at this moment is the over-estimate which generous friends form of me. We are told that at the last judgment the secret of all consciences will be laid bare to the universe; would that mine were so this day, and that every passer-by could see me as I am!" "High above my head," he says at another time, "far, far away, I seem to hear the murmur of that world of thought and feeling to which I aspire so often, but where I can never attain. I think of those of my own age who have wings strong enough to reach it, but I think of them without jealousy, and as men on earth contemplate the elect and their felicity." And, criticizing his own composition, "When I begin a subject, my self-conceit" (says this exquisite artist) "imagines I am doing wonders; and when I have finished, I see nothing but a wretched made-up imitation, composed of odds and ends of colour stolen from other people's palettes, and tastelessly mixed together on mine." Such was his *passion for perfection*, his disdain for all poetical work not perfectly adequate and felicitous. The magic of expression, to which by the force of this passion he won his way, will make the name of Maurice de Guérin remembered in literature.

I have already mentioned the *Centaur*, a sort of prose poem by Guérin, which Madame Sand published after his death. The idea of this composition came to him, M. Sainte-Beuve says, in the course of some visits which he made with his friend, M. Trebutien, a learned antiquarian, to the Museum of Antiquities in the Louvre. The free and wild life which the Greeks expressed by such creations as the Centaur had, as we might well expect, a strong charm for him; under the same inspiration he composed a *Bacchante*, which is lost, and which was meant by him to form part of a prose poem on the adventures of Bacchus in India. Real as was the affinity which Guérin's nature had for these subjects, I doubt whether, in treating them, he would have found the full and final employment of his talent. But the beauty of his *Centaur* is extraordinary; in its whole conception and expression this piece has in a wonderful degree that natural magic of which I have said so much, and the rhythm has a charm which bewitches even a foreigner. An old Centaur on his mountain is supposed to relate to Melampus, a human questioner, the life of his youth. Untranslatable as the piece is, I shall conclude with some extracts from it:

"I had my birth in the caves of these mountains. Like the stream of

this valley, whose first drops trickle from some weeping rock in a deep cavern, the first moment of my life fell in the darkness of a remote abode, and without breaking the silence. When our mothers draw near to the time of their delivery, they withdraw to the caverns, and in the depth of the loneliest of them, in the thickest of its gloom, bring forth, without uttering a plaint, a fruit silent as themselves. Their puissant milk makes us surmount, without weakness or dubious struggle, the first difficulties of life; and yet we leave our caverns later than you your cradles. The reason is that we have a doctrine that the early days of existence should be kept apart and enshrouded, as days filled with the presence of the gods. Nearly the whole term of my growth was passed in the darkness where I was born. The recesses of my dwelling ran so far under the mountain that I should not have known on which side was the exit, had not the winds, when they sometimes made their way through the opening, sent fresh airs in, and a sudden trouble. Sometimes, too, my mother came back to me, having about her the odours of the valleys, or streaming from the waters which were her haunt. Her returning thus, without a word said of the valleys or the rivers, but with the emanations from them hanging about her, troubled my spirit, and I moved up and down restlessly in my darkness. 'What is it,' I cried, 'this outside world whither my mother is borne, and what reigns there in it so potent as to attract her so often?' At these moments my own force began to make me unquiet. I felt in it a power which could not remain idle; and betaking myself either to toss my arms or to gallop backwards and forwards in the spacious darkness of the cavern, I tried to make out from the blows which I dealt in the empty space, or from the transport of my course through it, in what direction my arms were meant to reach or my feet to bear me. Since that day, I have wound my arms round the bust of Centaurs, and round the body of heroes, and round the trunks of oaks; my hands have assayed the rocks, the waters, plants without number, and the subtlest impressions of the air, — for I uplift them in the dark and still nights to catch the breaths of wind, and to draw signs whereby I may augur my road; my feet, — look, O Melampus, how worn they are! And yet, all benumbed as I am in this extremity of age, there are days when, in broad sunlight, on the mountain-tops, I renew these gallopings of my youth in the cavern, and with the same object, brandishing my arms and employing all the fleetness which yet is left to me.

.

"O Melampus, thou who wouldst know the life of the Centaurs, wherefore have the gods willed that thy steps should lead thee to me, the oldest and most forlorn of them all. It is long since I have ceased to practise any part of their life. I quit no more this mountain summit, to which age has confined me. The point of my arrows now serves me only

to uproot some tough-fibred plant; the tranquil lakes know me still, but the rivers have forgotten me. I will tell thee a little of my youth; but these recollections, issuing from a worn memory, come like the drops of a niggardly libation poured from a damaged urn.

"The course of my youth was rapid and full of agitation. Movement was my life, and my steps knew no bound. One day when I was following the course of a valley seldom entered by the Centaurs, I discovered a man making his way up the stream-side on the opposite bank. He was the first whom my eyes had lighted on: I despised him. 'Behold,' I cried, 'at the utmost but the half of what I am! Doubtless he is a Centaur overthrown by the gods, and reduced by them to drag himself along thus.'

.

"Wandering along at my own will like the rivers, feeling wherever I went the presence of Cybele, whether in the bed of the valleys, or on the height of the mountains, I bounded whither I would, like a blind and chainless life. But when Night, filled with the charm of the gods, overtook me on the slopes of the mountain, she guided me to the mouth of the caverns, and there tranquillized me as she tranquillizes the billows of the sea. Stretched across the threshold of my retreat, my flanks hidden within the cave, and my head under the open sky, I watched the spectacle of the dark. The sea-gods, it is said, quit, during the hours of darkness their palaces under the deep; they seat themselves on the promontories, and their eyes wander over the expanse of the waves. Even so I kept watch, having at my feet an expanse of life like the hushed sea. My regards had free range, and travelled to the most distant points. Like sea-beaches which never lose their wetness, the line of mountains to the west retained the imprint of gleams not perfectly wiped out by the shadows. In that quarter still survived, in pale clearness, mountain-summits naked and pure. There I beheld at one time the god Pan descend, ever solitary; at another, the choir of mystic divinities; or I saw pass some mountain nymph charm-struck by the night. Sometimes the eagles of Mount Olympus traversed the upper sky, and were lost to view among the far-off constellations, or in the shade of the dreaming forests.

"Thou pursuest after wisdom, O Melampus, which is the science of the will of the gods; and thou roamest from people to people like a mortal driven by the destinies. In the times when I kept my night-watches before the caverns, I have sometimes believed that I was about to surprise the thought of the sleeping Cybele, and that the mother of the gods, betrayed by her dreams, would let fall some of her secrets; but I have never made out more than sounds which faded away in the murmur of night, or words inarticulate as the bubbling of the rivers.

"'O Macareus,' one day said the great Chiron to me, whose old age I tended; 'we are, both of us, Centaurs of the mountain; but how different

are our lives! Of my days all the study is (thou seest it) the search for plants; thou, thou art like those mortals who have picked up on the waters or in the woods, and carried to their lips, some pieces of the reed-pipe thrown away by the god Pan. From that hour these mortals, having caught from their relics of the god a passion for wild life, or perhaps smitten with some secret madness, enter into the wilderness, plunge among the forests, follow the course of the streams, bury themselves in the heart of the mountains, restless, and haunted by an unknown purpose. The mares beloved of the winds in the farthest Scythia are not wilder than thou, nor more cast down at nightfall, when the North Wind has departed. Seekest thou to know the gods, O Macareus, and from what source men, animals, and the elements of the universal fire have their origin? But the aged Ocean, the father of all things, keeps locked within his own breast these secrets; and the nymphs, who stand around, sing as they weave their eternal dance before him, to cover any sound which might escape from his lips half-opened by slumber. The mortals, dear to the gods for their virtue, have received from their hands lyres to give delight to man, or the seeds of new plants to make him rich; but from their inexorable lips, nothing! ’

.
 “Such were the lessons which the old Chiron gave me. Waned to the very extremity of life, the Centaur yet nourished in his spirit the most lofty discourse.

.
 “For me, O Melampus, I decline into my last days, calm as the setting of the constellations. I still retain enterprise enough to climb to the top of the rocks, and there I linger late, either gazing on the wild and restless clouds, or to see come up from the horizon the rainy Hyades, the Pleiades, or the great Orion; but I feel myself perishing and passing quickly away, like a snow-wreath floating on the stream; and soon shall I be mingled with the waters which flow in the vast bosom of Earth.”

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1770—1850

By THOMAS DE QUINCEY¹ (1785—1859)



IN 1807 it was, at the beginning of winter, that I first saw William Wordsworth. I have already mentioned that I had introduced myself to his notice by letter as early as the spring of 1803. To this hour it has continued, I believe, a mystery to Wordsworth, why it was that I suffered an interval of four and a half years to slip away before availing myself of the standing invitation with which I had been honoured to the poet's house. Very probably he accounted for this delay by supposing that the new-born liberty of an Oxford life, with its multiplied enjoyments, acting upon a boy just emancipated from the restraints of a school, and, in one hour, elevated into what we Oxonians so proudly and so exclusively denominate "a man," might have tempted me into pursuits alien from the pure intellectual passions which had so powerfully mastered my youthful heart some years before. Extinguished such a passion could not be; nor could he think, if remembering the fervour with which I had expressed it, the sort of "nympholepsy" which had seized upon me, and which, in some imperfect way, I had avowed with reference to the very lakes and mountains, amongst which the scenery of this most original poetry had chiefly grown up and moved. The very names of the ancient hills — Fairfield, Seat Sandal, Helvellyn, Blencathara, Glaramara; the names of the sequestered glens — such as Borrowdale, Martindale, Mardale, Wasdale, and Ennerdale; but, above all, the shy pastoral recesses, not garishly in the world's eye, like Windermere or Derwentwater, but lurking half unknown to the traveller of that day — Grasmere, for instance, the lovely abode of the poet himself, solitary, and yet sowed, as it were, with a thin diffusion of humble dwellings — here a scattering, and there a clustering, as in the starry heavens — sufficient to afford, at every turn and angle, human remembrances and memorials of time-honoured affections, or of passions (as the "Churchyard amongst the Mountains" will amply demonstrate) not wanting even in scenic and tragical interest — these were so many local spells upon me, equally poetic and elevating with the Miltonic names of Valdarno and Vallombrosa.

¹ Reprinted from *Reminiscences of the English Lakes and the Lake Poets* these first appeared in Tait's *Edinburgh Magazine*, beginning in 1834.

The footnotes have been omitted.

Deep are the voices which seem to call, deep is the lesson which would be taught even to the most thoughtless of men —

*“Could field, or grove, or any spot on earth,
Show to his eye an image of the pangs
Which it hath witness’d; render back an echo
Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod.”*

Meantime, my delay was due to anything rather than to waning interest. On the contrary, the real cause of my delay was the too great profundity, and the increasing profundity, of my interest in this regeneration of our national poetry; and the increasing awe, in due proportion to the decaying thoughtlessness of boyhood, which possessed me for the character of its author. So far from neglecting Wordsworth, it is a fact that twice I had undertaken a long journey expressly for the purpose of paying my respects to Wordsworth; twice I came so far as the little rustic inn (then the sole inn of the neighbourhood) at Church Coniston; and on neither occasion could I summon confidence enough to present myself before him. It was not that I had any want of proper boldness for facing the most numerous company of a mixed or ordinary character: reserved, indeed, I was, perhaps even shy — from the character of my mind, so profoundly meditative, and the character of my life, so profoundly sequestered — but still, from counteracting causes, I was not deficient in a reasonable self-confidence towards the world generally. But the very image of Wordsworth, as I prefigured it to my own planet-struck eye, crushed my faculties as before Elijah or St. Paul. Twice, as I have said, did I advance as far as the lake of Coniston; which is about eight miles from the church of Grasmere, and once I absolutely went forwards from Coniston to the very gorge of Hammerscar, from which the whole Vale of Grasmere suddenly breaks upon the view in a style of almost theatrical surprise, with its lovely valley stretching before the eye in the distance, the lake lying immediately below, with its solemn ark-like island of four and a half acres in size seemingly floating on its surface, and its exquisite outline on the opposite shore, revealing all its little bays and wild sylvan margin, feathered to the edge with wild flowers and ferns. In one quarter, a little wood, stretching for about half a mile towards the outlet of the lake; more directly in opposition to the spectator, a few green fields; and beyond them, just two bowshots from the water, a little white cottage gleaming from the midst of trees, with a vast and seemingly never-ending series of ascents rising above it to the height of more than three thousand feet. That little cottage was Wordsworth’s from the time of his marriage, and earlier; in fact, from the beginning of the century to the year 1808. Afterwards, for many a year, it was mine. Catching one hasty glimpse of this loveliest of landscapes, I retreated like a guilty thing, for fear I might

be surprised by Wordsworth, and then returned faintheartedly to Coniston, and so to Oxford, *re infectâ*.

This was in 1806. And thus far, from mere excess of nervous distrust in my own powers for sustaining a conversation with Wordsworth, I had for nearly five years shrunk from a meeting for which, beyond all things under heaven, I longed. In early youth I laboured under a peculiar embarrassment and penury of words, when I sought to convey my thoughts adequately upon interesting subjects: neither was it words only that I wanted; but I could not unravel, I could not even make perfectly conscious to myself, the subsidiary thoughts into which one leading thought often radiates; or, at least, I could not do this with anything like the rapidity requisite for conversation. I laboured like a sibyl instinct with the burden of prophetic woe, as often as I found myself dealing with any topic in which the understanding combined with deep feelings to suggest mixed and tangled thoughts: and thus partly—partly also from my invincible habit of reverie—at that era of my life, I had a most distinguished talent “*pour le silence*.” Wordsworth, from something of the same causes, suffered (by his own report to myself) at the same age from pretty much the same infirmity. And yet, in more advanced years—probably about twenty-eight or thirty—both of us acquired a remarkable fluency in the art of unfolding our thoughts colloquially. However, at that period my deficiencies were what I have described. And, after all, though I had no absolute cause for anticipating contempt, I was so far right in my fears, that since that time I have had occasion to perceive a worldly tone of sentiment in Wordsworth, not less than in Mrs. Hannah More and other literary people, by which they were led to set a higher value upon a limited respect from a person high in the world’s esteem than upon the most lavish spirit of devotion from an obscure quarter. Now, in that point, *my* feelings are far otherwise.

Meantime, the world went on; events kept moving; and, amongst them, in the course of 1807, occurred the event of Coleridge’s return to England from his official station in the Governor’s family at Malta. At Bridgewater, as I have already recorded, in the summer of 1807, I was introduced to him. Several weeks after he came with his family to the Bristol Hot-wells, at which, by accident, I was then visiting. On calling upon him, I found that he had been engaged by the Royal Institution to lecture at their theatre in Albemarle Street during the coming winter of 1807–8, and, consequently, was embarrassed about the mode of conveying his family to Keswick. Upon this, I offered my services to escort them in a post-chaise. This offer was cheerfully accepted; and at the latter end of October we set forwards—Mrs. Coleridge, viz., with her two sons—Hartley, aged nine, Derwent, about seven—her beautiful little daughter, about five, and, finally, myself. Going by the direct route through Gloucester, Bridgenorth, etc., on the third day we reached Liverpool, where I took

up my quarters at a hotel, whilst Mrs. Coleridge paid a visit of a few days to a very interesting family, who had become friends of Southey during his visit to Portugal. These were the Misses Koster, daughters of an English gold-merchant of celebrity, who had recently quitted Lisbon on the approach of the French army under Junot. Mr. Koster did me the honour to call at my quarters, and invite me to his house; an invitation which I very readily accepted, and had thus an opportunity of becoming acquainted with a family the most accomplished I had ever known. At dinner there appeared only the family party — several daughters, and one son, a fine young man of twenty, but who was *consciously* dying of asthma. Mr. Koster, the head of the family, was distinguished for his good sense and practical information; but, in Liverpool, even more so by his eccentric and obstinate denial of certain notorious events; in particular, some two years later, he denied that any such battle as Talavera had ever been fought, and had a large wager depending upon the decision. His house was the resort of distinguished foreigners; and, on the first evening of my dining there, as well as afterwards, I there met that marvel of women, Madame Catalani. I had heard her repeatedly; but never before been near enough to see her smile and converse — even to be honoured with a smile myself. She and Lady Hamilton were the most effectively brilliant women I ever saw. However, on this occasion, the Misses Koster outshone even La Catalani; to her they talked in the most fluent Italian; to some foreign men, in Portuguese; to one in French; and to most of the party in English; and each, by turns, seemed to be their native tongue. Nor did they shrink, even in the presence of the mighty enchantress, from exhibiting their musical skill.

Leaving Liverpool, after about a week's delay, we pursued our journey northwards. We had slept on the first day at Lancaster. Consequently, at the rate of motion which then prevailed throughout England — which, however, was rarely equalled on that western road, where all things were in arrear by comparison with the eastern and southern roads of the kingdom — we found ourselves, about three o'clock in the afternoon, at Ambleside, fourteen miles to the north-west of Kendal, and thirty-six from Lancaster. There, for the last time, we stopped to change horses; and about four o'clock we found ourselves on the summit of the White Moss, a hill which rises between the second and third milestones on the stage from Ambleside to Keswick, and which then retarded the traveller's advance by a full fifteen minutes, but is now evaded by a lower line of road. In ascending this hill, from weariness of moving so slowly, I, with the two Coleridges, had alighted; and, as we all chose to refresh ourselves by running down the hill into Grasmere, we had left the chaise behind us, and had even lost the sound of the wheels at times, when all at once we came, at an abrupt turn of the road, in sight of a white cottage, with two yew-trees breaking the glare of its white walls. A sudden shock seized me on 'rec-

ognizing this cottage, of which, in the previous year, I had gained a momentary glimpse from Hammerscar, on the opposite side of the lake. I paused, and felt my old panic returning upon me; but just then, as if to take away all doubt upon the subject, I saw Hartley Coleridge, who had gained upon me considerably, suddenly turn in at a garden gate; this motion to the right at once confirmed me in my belief that here at last we had reached our port; that this little cottage was tenanted by that man whom, of all the men from the beginning of time, I most fervently desired to see; that in less than a minute I should meet Wordsworth face to face. Coleridge was of opinion that, if a man were really and *consciously* to see an apparition, in such circumstances death would be the inevitable result; and, if so, the wish which we hear so commonly expressed for such experience is as thoughtless as that of Semele in the Grecian Mythology, so natural in a female, that her lover should visit her *en grand costume* — presumptuous ambition, that unexpectedly wrought its own ruinous chastisement! Judged by Coleridge's test, my situation could not have been so terrific as *his* who anticipates a ghost; for, certainly, I survived this meeting; but at that instant it seemed pretty much the same to my own feelings.

Never before or since can I reproach myself with having trembled at the approaching presence of any creature that is born of woman, excepting only, for once or twice in my life, woman herself. Now, however, I *did* tremble; and I forgot, what in no other circumstances I could have forgotten, to stop for the coming up of the chaise, that I might be ready to hand Mrs. Coleridge out. Had Charlemagne and all his peerage been behind me, or Cæsar and his equipage, or Death on his pale horse, I should have forgotten them at that moment of intense expectation, and of eyes fascinated to what lay before me, or what might in a moment appear. Through the little gate I pressed forward; ten steps beyond it lay the principal door of the house. To this, no longer clearly conscious of my own feelings, I passed on rapidly; I heard a step, a voice, and, like a flash of lightning, I saw the figure emerge of a tallish man, who held out his hand, and saluted me with most cordial expressions of welcome. The chaise, however, drawing up to the gate at that moment, he (and there needed no Roman nomenclator to tell me that this *he* was Wordsworth) felt himself summoned to advance and receive Mrs. Coleridge. I, therefore, stunned almost with the actual accomplishment of a catastrophe so long anticipated and so long postponed, mechanically went forward into the house. A little semi-vestibule between two doors prefaced the entrance into what might be considered the principal room of the cottage. It was an oblong square, not above eight and a half feet high, sixteen feet long, and twelve broad; very prettily wainscoted from the floor to the ceiling with dark polished oak, slightly embellished with carving. One window there was — a perfect and unpretending cottage window, with little diamond panes, embowered at almost every season of the year with roses,

and in the summer and autumn with a profusion of jasmine and other fragrant shrubs. From the exuberant luxuriance of the vegetation around it, and from the dark hue of the wainscoting, this window, though tolerably large, did not furnish a very powerful light to one who entered from the open air. However, I saw sufficiently to be aware of two ladies just entering the room, through a doorway opening upon a little staircase. The foremost, a tallish young woman, with the most winning expression of benignity upon her features, advanced to me, presenting her hand with so frank an air that all embarrassment must have fled in a moment before the native goodness of her manner. This was Mrs. Wordsworth, cousin of the poet, and, for the last five years or more, his wife. She was now mother of two children, a son and a daughter; and she furnished a remarkable proof how possible it is for a woman neither handsome nor even comely according to the rigour of criticism—nay, generally pronounced very plain—to exercise all the practical fascination of beauty, through the mere compensatory charms of sweetness all but angelic, of simplicity the most entire, womanly self-respect and purity of heart speaking through all her looks, acts, and movements. *Words*, I was going to have added; but her words were few. In reality, she talked so little that Mr. Slave-Trade Clarkson used to allege against her that she could only say “*God bless you!*” Certainly, her intellect was not of an active order; but, in a quiescent, reposing, meditative way, she appeared always to have a genial enjoyment from her own thoughts; and it would have been strange, indeed, if she, who enjoyed such eminent advantages of training, from the daily society of her husband and his sister, failed to acquire some power of judging for herself, and putting forth some functions of activity. But undoubtedly that was not her element: to feel and to enjoy in a luxurious repose of mind—there was her *forte* and her peculiar privilege; and how much better this was adapted to her husband’s taste, how much more adapted to uphold the comfort of his daily life, than a blue-stocking loquacity, or even a legitimate talent for discussion, may be inferred from his verses, beginning—

“*She was a phantom of delight,
When first she gleam’d upon my sight.*”

Once for all, these exquisite lines were dedicated to Mrs. Wordsworth; were understood to describe her—to have been prompted by the feminine graces of her character; hers they are, and will remain for ever. To these, therefore, I may refer the reader for an idea of what was most important in the partner and second self of the poet. And I will add to this abstract of her *moral* portrait these few concluding traits of her appearance in a physical sense. Her figure was tolerably good. In complexion she was fair, and there was something peculiarly pleasing even in this accident of the skin, for it was accompanied by an animated expression of health, a

blessing which, in fact, she possessed uninterruptedly. Her eyes, the reader may already know, were

*"Like stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight, too, her dark brown hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn."*

Yet strange it is to tell that, in these eyes of vesper gentleness, there was a considerable obliquity of vision; and much beyond that slight obliquity which is often supposed to be an attractive foible in the countenance: this *ought* to have been displeasing or repulsive; yet, in fact, it was not. Indeed all faults, had they been ten times more and greater, would have been neutralized by that supreme expression of her features to the unity of which every lineament in the fixed parts, and every undulation in the moving parts, of her countenance, concurred, viz., a sunny benignity — a radiant graciousness — such as in this world I never saw surpassed.

Immediately behind her moved a lady, shorter, slighter, and perhaps, in all other respects, as different from her in personal characteristics as could have been wished for the most effective contrast. "Her face was of Egyptian brown"; rarely, in a woman of English birth, had I seen a more determinate gipsy tan. Her eyes were not soft, as Mrs. Wordsworth's, nor were they fierce or bold; but they were wild and startling, and hurried in their motion. Her manner was warm and even ardent; her sensibility seemed constitutionally deep; and some subtle fire of impassioned intellect apparently burned within her, which, being alternately pushed forward into a conspicuous expression by the irrepressible instincts of her temperament, and then immediately checked, in obedience to the decorum of her sex and age, and her maidenly condition, gave to her whole demeanour, and to her conversation, an air of embarrassment, and even of self-conflict, that was almost distressing to witness. Even her very utterance and enunciation often suffered, in point of clearness and steadiness, from the agitation of her excessive organic sensibility. At times, the self-counteraction and self-baffling of her feelings caused her even to stammer, and so determinately to stammer that a stranger who should have seen her and quitted her in that state of feeling would have certainly set her down for one plagued with that infirmity of speech as distressingly as Charles Lamb himself. This was Miss Wordsworth, the only sister of the poet — his "Dorothy"; who naturally owed so much to the lifelong intercourse with her great brother in his most solitary and sequestered years; but, on the other hand, to whom he has acknowledged obligations of the profoundest nature; and, in particular, this mighty one, through which we also, the admirers and the worshippers of this great poet, are become equally her debtors — that, whereas the intellect of Wordsworth was, by its original tendency, too stern, too austere too much enamoured of an ascetic harsh

sublimity, she it was — the lady who paced by his side continually through sylvan and mountain tracks, in Highland glens, and in the dim recesses of German charcoal-burners — that first *couched* his eye to the sense of beauty, humanized him by the gentler charities, and engrafted, with her delicate female touch, those graces upon the ruder growths of his nature which have since clothed the forest of his genius with a foliage corresponding in loveliness and beauty to the strength of its boughs and the massiness of its trunks. The greatest deductions from Miss Wordsworth's attractions, and from the exceeding interest which surrounded her in right of her character, of her history, and of the relation which she fulfilled towards her brother, were the glancing quickness of her motions, and other circumstances in her deportment (such as her stooping attitude when walking), which gave an ungraceful, and even an unsexual character to her appearance when out-of-doors. She did not cultivate the graces which preside over the person and its carriage. But, on the other hand, she was a person of very remarkable endowments intellectually; and, in addition to the other great services which she rendered to her brother, this I may mention, as greater than all the rest, and it was one which equally operated to the benefit of every casual companion in a walk — viz., the exceeding sympathy, always ready and always profound, by which she made all that one could tell her, all that one could describe, all that one could quote from a foreign author, reverberate, as it were, *à plusieurs reprises*, to one's own feelings, by the manifest impression it made upon *hers*. The pulses of light are not more quick or more inevitable in their flow and undulation, than were the answering and echoing movements of her sympathizing attention. Her knowledge of literature was irregular, and thoroughly unsystematic. She was content to be ignorant of many things; but what she knew and had really mastered lay where it could not be disturbed — in the temple of her own most fervid heart.

Such were the two ladies who, with himself and two children, and at that time one servant, composed the poet's household. They were both, I believe, about twenty-eight years old; and, if the reader inquires about the single point which I have left untouched in their portraiture — viz., the style of their manners — I may say that it was, in *some* points, naturally of a plain household simplicity, but every way pleasing, unaffected, and (as respects Mrs. Wordsworth) even dignified. Few persons had seen so little as this lady of the world. She had seen nothing of high life, for she had seen little of any. Consequently, she was unacquainted with the conventional modes of behaviour, prescribed in particular situations by high breeding. But, as these modes are little more than the product of dispassionate good sense, applied to the circumstances of the case, it is surprising how few deficiencies are perceptible, even to the most vigilant eye — or, at least, essential deficiencies — in the general demeanour of any unaffected young woman, acting habitually under a sense of sexual dignity and natural

courtesy. Miss Wordsworth had seen more of life, and even of good company; for she had lived, when quite a girl, under the protection of Dr. Cookson, a near relative, canon of Windsor, and a personal favourite of the Royal Family, especially of George III. Consequently, she ought to have been the more polished of the two; and yet, from greater natural aptitudes for refinement of manner in her sister-in-law, and partly, perhaps, from her more quiet and subdued manner, Mrs. Wordsworth would have been pronounced very much the more lady-like person.

From the interest which attaches to anybody so nearly connected as these two ladies with a great poet, I have allowed myself a larger latitude than else might have been justifiable in describing them. I now go on with my narrative:

I was ushered up a little flight of stairs, fourteen in all, to a little drawing-room, or whatever the reader chooses to call it. Wordsworth himself has described the fireplace of this room as his

"Half-kitchen and half-parlour fire."

It was not fully seven feet six inches high, and, in other respects, pretty nearly of the same dimensions as the rustic hall below. There was, however, in a small recess, a library of perhaps three hundred volumes, which seemed to consecrate the room as the poet's study and composing room; and such occasionally it was. But far oftener he both studied, as I found, and composed, on the high road. I had not been two minutes at the fire-side, when in came Wordsworth, returning from his friendly attentions to the travellers below, who, it seemed, had been over-persuaded by hospitable solicitations to stay for this night in Grasmere, and to make out the remaining thirteen miles to their road to Keswick on the following day. Wordsworth entered. And "*what-like*" to use a Westmoreland as well as a Scottish expression — "*what-like*" was Wordsworth? A reviewer in "*Tait's Magazine*," noticing some recent collection of literary portraits, gives it as his opinion that Charles Lamb's head was the finest among them. This remark may have been justified by the engraved portraits; but, certainly, the critic would have cancelled it, had he seen the original heads — at least, had he seen them in youth or in maturity; for Charles Lamb bore age with less disadvantage to the intellectual expression of his appearance than Wordsworth, in whom a sanguine complexion had, of late years, usurped upon the original bronze-tint; and this change of hue, and change in the quality of skin, had been made fourfold more conspicuous, and more unfavourable in its general effect, by the harsh contrast of grizzled hair which had displaced the original brown. No change in personal appearance ever can have been so unfortunate; for, generally speaking, whatever other disadvantages old age may bring along with it, one effect, at least in male subjects, has a compensating tendency — that it removes any tone of vigour too harsh, and mitigates the expression of power too unsubdued.

But, in Wordsworth, the effect of the change has been to substitute an air of animal vigour, or, at least, hardiness, as if derived from constant exposure to the wind and weather for the fine sombre complexion which he once wore, resembling that of a Venetian senator or a Spanish monk.

Here, however, in describing the personal appearance of Wordsworth, I go back, of course, to the point of time at which I am speaking. He was, upon the whole, not a well-made man. His legs were pointedly condemned by all female connoisseurs in legs; not that they were bad in any way which *would* force itself upon your notice — there was no absolute deformity about them; and undoubtedly they had been serviceable legs beyond the average standard of human requisition; for I calculate, upon good data, that with these identical legs Wordsworth must have traversed a distance of 175,000 to 180,000 English miles — a mode of exertion which, to him, stood in the stead of alcohol and all other stimulants whatsoever to the animal spirits; to which, indeed, he was indebted for a life of unclouded happiness, and we for much of what is most excellent in his writings. But, useful as they have proved themselves, the Wordsworthian legs were certainly not ornamental; and it was really a pity, as I agreed with a lady in thinking, that he had not another pair for evening dress parties — when no boots lend their friendly aid to mask our imperfections from the eyes of female rigorists — those *elegantes formarum spectatrices*. A sculptor would certainly have disapproved of their contour. But the worst part of Wordsworth's person was the bust; there was a narrowness and a droop about the shoulders which became striking, and had an effect of meanness, when brought into close juxtaposition with a figure of a more statuesque build. Once on a summer evening, walking in the Vale of Langdale with Wordsworth, his sister, and Mr. J——, a native Westmoreland clergyman, I remember that Miss Wordsworth was positively mortified by the peculiar illustration which settled upon this defective conformation. Mr. J——, a fine towering figure, six feet high, massy and columnar in his proportions, happened to be walking, a little in advance, with Wordsworth; Miss Wordsworth and myself being in the rear; and from the nature of the conversation which then prevailed in our front rank, something or other about money, devises, buying and selling, we of the rear-guard thought it requisite to preserve this arrangement for a space of three miles or more; during which time, at intervals, Miss Wordsworth would exclaim, in a tone of vexation, "Is it possible, — can that be William? How very mean he looks!" And she did not conceal a mortification that seemed really painful, until I, for my part, could not forbear laughing outright at the serious interest which she carried into this trifle. She was, however, right, as regarded the mere visual judgment. Wordsworth's figure, with all its defects, was brought into powerful relief by one which had been cast in a more square and massy mould; and in such a case it impressed

a spectator with a sense of absolute meanness, more especially when viewed from behind and not counteracted by his countenance; and yet Wordsworth was of a good height (five feet ten), and not a slender man; on the contrary, by the side of Southey, his limbs looked thick, almost in a disproportionate degree. But the total effect of Wordsworth's person was always worst in a state of motion. Meantime, his face — that was one which would have made amends for greater defects of figure. Many such, and finer, I have seen amongst the portraits of Titian, and, in a later period, amongst those of Vandyke, from the great era of Charles I., as also from the court of Elizabeth and of Charles II., but none which has more impressed me in my own time.

Haydon, in his great picture of "Christ's Entry into Jerusalem," has introduced Wordsworth in the character of a disciple attending his Divine Master, and Voltaire in the character of a sneering Jewish elder. This fact is well known; and, as the picture itself is tolerably well known to the public eye, there are multitudes now living who will have seen a very impressive likeness of Wordsworth — some consciously, some not suspecting it. There will, however, always be many who have *not* seen any portrait at all of Wordsworth; and therefore I will describe its general outline and effect. It was a face of the long order, often falsely classed as oval; but a greater mistake is made by many people in supposing the long face which prevailed so remarkably in the Elizabethan and Carolinian periods to have become extinct in our own. Miss Ferrier, in one of her novels ("Marriage," I think), makes a Highland girl protest that "no Englishman *with his round face*' shall ever wean her heart from her own country; but England is not the land of round faces; and those have observed little, indeed, who think so: France it is that grows the round face, and in so large a majority of her provinces that it has become one of the national characteristics. And the remarkable impression which an Englishman receives from the eternal recurrence of the orbicular countenance proves of itself, without any *conscious* testimony, how the fact stands; in the blind sense of a monotony, not felt elsewhere, lies involved an argument that cannot be gainsaid. Besides, even upon an *a priori* argument, how is it possible that the long face so prevalent in England, by all confession, in certain splendid eras of our history, should have had time, in some five or six generations, to grow extinct? Again, the character of face varies essentially in different provinces. Wales has no connection in this respect with Devonshire, nor Kent with Yorkshire, nor either with Westmoreland. England, it is true, tends beyond all known examples, to a general amalgamation of differences, by means of its unrivalled freedom of intercourse. Yet, even in England, law and necessity have opposed as yet such and so many obstacles to the free diffusion of labour that every generation occupies, by at least five-sixth of its numbers, the ground of its ancestors.

The movable part of a population is chiefly the higher part; and it is

the lower classes that, in every nation, compose the *fundus*, in which lies latent the national face, as well as the national character. Each exists here in racy purity and integrity, not disturbed in the one by alien intermarriages, nor in the other by novelties of opinion, or other casual effects, derived from education and reading. Now, look into this *fundus*, and you will find, in many districts, no such prevalence of the round orbicular face as some people erroneously suppose; and in Westmoreland, especially, the ancient long face of the Elizabethan period, powerfully resembling in all its lineaments the ancient Roman face, and often (though not so uniformly) the face of northern Italy in modern times. The face of Sir Walter Scott, as Irving, the pulpit orator, once remarked to me, was the indigenous face of the Border: the mouth, which was bad, and the entire lower part of the face, are seen repeated in thousands of working-men; or, as Irving chose to illustrate his position, "in thousands of Border horse-jockeys." In like manner, Wordsworth's face was, if not absolutely the indigenous face of the Lake district, at any rate a variety of that face, a modification of that original type. The head was well filled out; and there, to begin with, was a great advantage over the head of Charles Lamb, which was absolutely truncated at the posterior region — sawn off, as it were, by no timid sawyer. The forehead was not remarkably lofty — and, by the way, some artists, in their ardour for realizing their phenological preconceptions, not suffering nature to surrender quietly and by slow degrees her real alphabet of signs and hieroglyphic characters, but forcing her language prematurely into conformity with their own crude speculations, have given to Sir Walter Scott a pile of forehead which is unpleasing and cataphysical, in fact, a caricature of anything that is ever seen in nature, and would (if real) be esteemed a deformity; in one instance — that which was introduced in some annual or other — the forehead makes about two-thirds of the entire face. Wordsworth's forehead is also liable to caricature misrepresentations in these days of phenology: but, whatever it may appear to be in any man's fanciful portrait, the real living forehead, as I have been in the habit of seeing it for more than five-and-twenty years, is not remarkable for its height; but it *is*, perhaps, remarkable for its breadth and expansive development. Neither are the eyes of Wordsworth "large," as is erroneously stated somewhere in "Peter's Letters"; on the contrary, they are (I think) rather small; but *that* does not interfere with their effect, which at times is fine, and suitable to his intellectual character. At times, I say, for the depth and subtlety of eyes, even their colouring (as to condensation or dilation), varies exceedingly with the state of the stomach; and, if young ladies were aware of the magical transformations which can be wrought in the depth and sweetness of the eye by a few weeks' walking exercise, I fancy we should see their habits in this point altered greatly for the better. I have seen Wordsworth's eyes oftentimes affected powerfully in this respect; his

eyes are not, under any circumstances, bright, lustrous, or piercing; but, after a long day's toil in walking, I have seen them assume an appearance the most solemn and spiritual that it is possible for the human eye to wear. The light which resides in them is at no time a superficial light; but, under favourable accidents, it is a light which seems to come from unfathomed depths; in fact, it is more truly entitled to be held "the light that never was on land or sea," a light radiating from some far spiritual world, than any the most idealizing that ever yet a painter's hand created. The nose, a little arched, is large; which, by the way (according to a natural phrenology, existing centuries ago amongst some of the lowest among the human species), has always been accounted an unequivocal expression of animal appetites organically strong. And that expressed the simple truth: Wordsworth's intellectual passions were fervent and strong: but they rested upon a basis of preternatural animal sensibility diffused through *all* the animal passions (or appetites); and something of that will be found to hold of all poets who have been great by original force and power, not (as Virgil) by means of fine management and exquisite artifice of composition applied to their conceptions. The mouth, and the whole circumjacent parts of the mouth, composed the strongest feature in Wordsworth's face; there was nothing specially to be noticed that I know of in the mere outline of the lips; but the swell and protusion of the parts above and around the mouth are both noticeable in themselves, and also because they remind me of a very interesting fact which I have discovered about three years after this my first visit to Wordsworth.

Being a great collector of everything relating to Milton, I had naturally possessed myself, whilst yet very young, of Richardson the painter's thick octavo volume of notes on the "Paradise Lost." It happened, however, that my copy, in consequence of that mania for portrait collecting which has stripped so many English classics of their engraved portraits, wanted the portrait of Milton. Subsequently I ascertained that it ought to have had a very good likeness of the great poet; and I never rested until I procured a copy of the book which had not suffered in this respect by the fatal admiration of the amateur. The particular copy offered to me was one which had been priced unusually high, on account of the unusually fine specimen which it contained of the engraved portrait. This, for a particular reason, I was exceedingly anxious to see; and the reason was — that, according to an anecdote reported by Richardson himself, this portrait, of all that were shown to her, was the only one acknowledged by Milton's last surviving daughter to be a strong likeness of her father. And her involuntary gestures concurred with her deliberate words: — for, on seeing all the rest, she was silent and inanimate; but the very instant she beheld that crayon drawing from which is derived the engraved head in Richardson's book, she burst out into a rapture of passionate recognition;

exclaiming—"That is my father! that is my dear father!" Naturally, therefore, after such a testimony, so much stronger than any other person in the world could offer to the authentic value of this portrait, I was eager to see it.

Judge of my astonishment when, in this portrait of Milton, I saw a likeness nearly perfect of Wordsworth, better by much than any which I have since seen of those expressly painted for himself. The likeness is tolerably preserved in that by Carruthers, in which one of the little Rydal waterfalls, etc., composes a background; yet this is much inferior, as a mere portrait of Wordsworth, to the Richardson head of Milton; and this, I believe, is the last which represents Wordsworth in the vigour of his power. The rest, which I have not seen, may be better as works of art (for anything I know to the contrary), but they must labour under the great disadvantage of presenting the features when "defeated," in the degree and the way I have described, by the peculiar ravages of old age, as it affects this family; for it is noticed of the Wordsworth, by those who are familiar with their peculiarities, that in their very blood and constitutional differences lie hidden causes that are able, in some mysterious way,

*"Those shocks of passion to prepare
That kill the bloom before its time,
And blanch, without the owner's crime,
The most resplendent hair."*

Some people, it is notorious, live faster by much than others, the oil is burned out sooner in one constitution than another: and the cause of this may be various; but in the Wordsworths one part of the cause is, no doubt, the secret fire of a temperament too fervid; the self-consuming energies of the brain, that gnaw at the heart and life-strings for ever. In that account which "The Excursion" presents to us of an imaginary Scotsman who, to still the tumult of his heart, when visiting the cataracts of a mountainous region, obliges himself to study the laws of light and colour as they affect the rainbow of the stormy waters, vainly attempting to mitigate the fever which consumed him by entangling his mind in profound speculations; raising a cross-fire of artillery from the subtilizing intellect, under the vain conceit that in this way he could silence the mighty battery of his impassioned heart: there we read a picture of Wordsworth and his own youth. In Miss Wordsworth every thoughtful observer might read the same self-consuming style of thought. And the effect upon each was so powerful for the promotion of a premature old age, and of a premature expression of old age, that strangers invariably supposed them fifteen to twenty years older than they were. And I remember Wordsworth once laughingly reported to me, on returning from a short journey in 1809, a little personal anecdote, which sufficiently showed what was

the spontaneous impression upon that subject of casual strangers, whose feelings were not confused by previous knowledge of the truth. He was travelling by stage-coach, and seated outside, amongst a good half-dozen of fellow-passengers. One of these, an elderly man, who confessed to having passed the grand climacterical year (9 multiplied into 7) of 63, though he did not say precisely by how many years, said to Wordsworth, upon some anticipations which they had been mutually discussing of changes likely to result from enclosures, etc., then going on or projecting — “Ay, ay, another dozen of years will show us strange sights; but you and I can hardly expect to see them.” — “How so?” said Wordsworth. “How so, my friend? How old do you take me to be?” — “Oh, I beg your pardon,” said the other; “I meant no offence — but what?” looking at Wordsworth more attentively — “you’ll never see threescore, I’m of opinion”; meaning to say that Wordsworth *had* seen it already. And, to show that he was not singular in so thinking, he appealed to all the other passengers; and the motion passed (*nem. con.*) that Wordsworth was rather over than under sixty. Upon this he told them the literal truth — that he had not yet accomplished his thirty-ninth year. “God bless me!” said the climacterical man; “so then, after all, you’ll have a chance to see your childer get up like, and get settled! Only to think of that!” And so closed the conversation, leaving to Wordsworth an undeniable record of his own prematurely expressed old age in this unaffected astonishment, amongst a whole party of plain men, that he could really belong to a generation of the forward-looking, who live by hope; and might reasonably expect to see a child of seven years old matured into a man. And yet, as Wordsworth lived into his 82nd year, it is plain that the premature expression of decay does not argue any real decay.

Returning to the question of portraits, I would observe that this Richardson engraving of Milton has the advantage of presenting, not only by far the best likeness of Wordsworth, but of Wordsworth in the prime of his powers — a point essential in the case of one so liable to premature decay. It may be supposed that I took an early opportunity of carrying the book down to Grasmere, and calling for the opinions of Wordsworth’s family upon this most remarkable coincidence. Not one member of that family but was as much impressed as myself with the accuracy of the likeness. All the peculiarities even were retained — a drooping appearance of the eyelids, that remarkable swell which I have noticed about the mouth, the way in which the hair lay upon the forehead. In two points only there was a deviation from the rigorous truth of Wordsworth’s features — the face was a little too short and too broad, and the eyes were too large. There was also a wreath of laurel about the head, which (as Wordsworth remarked) disturbed the natural expression of the whole picture; else, and with these few allowances, he also admitted that the resemblance was, *for that period of his life*, perfect, or as nearly so as art could accomplish.

I have gone into so large and circumstantial a review of my recollections on this point as would have been trifling and tedious in excess, had these recollections related to a less important man; but I have a certain knowledge that the least of them will possess a lasting and a growing interest in connection with William Wordsworth. How peculiar, how different from the interest which we grant to the ideas of a great philosopher, a great mathematician, or a great reformer, is that burning interest which settles on the great poets who have made themselves necessary to the human heart; who have first brought into consciousness, and have clothed in words, those grand catholic feelings that belong to the great catholic situations of life through all its stages; who have clothed them in such words that human wit despairs of bettering them! Mighty were the powers, solemn and serene is the memory, of Archimedes; and Apollonius shines like "the starry Galileo" in the firmament of human genius; yet how frosty is the feeling associated with these names by comparison with that which, upon every sunny lawn, by the side of every ancient forest, even in the farthest depths of Canada, many a young innocent girl, perhaps at this very moment — looking now with fear to the dark recesses of the infinite forest, and now with love to the pages of the infinite poet, until the fear is absorbed and forgotten in the love — cherishes in her heart for the name and person of Shakspeare!

The English language is travelling fast towards the fulfilment of its destiny. Through the influence of the dreadful Republic that within the thirty last years has run through all the stages of infancy into the first stage of maturity, and through the English colonies — African, Canadian, Indian, Australian — the English language (and, therefore, the English literature) is running forward towards its ultimate mission of eating up, like Aaron's rod, all other languages. Even the German and the Spanish will inevitably sink before it; perhaps within 100 or 150 years. In the recesses of California, in the vast solitudes of Australia, *The Churchyard Amongst the Mountains*, from Wordsworth's "Excursion," and many a scene of his shorter poems, will be read, even as now Shakspeare is read amongst the forests of Canada. All which relates to the writer of these poems will then bear a value of the same kind as that which attaches to our personal memorials (unhappily so slender) of Shakspeare.

Let me now attempt to trace, in a brief outline, the chief incidents in the life of William Wordsworth, which are interesting, not only in virtue of their illustrious subject, but also as exhibiting a most remarkable (almost a providential) arrangement of circumstances, all tending to one result — that of insulating from worldly cares, and carrying onward from childhood to the grave, in a state of serene happiness, one who was unfitted for daily toil, and, at all events, who could not, under such demands upon his time and anxieties, have prosecuted those genial labours in which all mankind have an interest.

William Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, a small town of Cumberland, lying about a dozen miles to the north-west of Keswick, on the high road from that town to Whitehaven. His father was a solicitor, and acted as an agent for that Lord Lonsdale, the immediate predecessor of the present, [1835] who is not unfrequently described by those who still remember him, as "the bad Lord Lonsdale." In what was he bad? Chiefly, I believe, in this — that, being a man of great local power, founded on his rank, on his official station of Lord-Lieutenant over two counties, and on a very large estate, he used his power at times in a most oppressive way. I have heard it said that he was mad; and, at any rate, he was inordinately capricious — capricious even to eccentricity. But, perhaps his madness was nothing more than the intemperance of a haughty and a headstrong will, encouraged by the consciousness of power, and tempted to abuses of it by the abject servility which poverty and dependence presented in one direction, embittering the contrast of that defiance which inevitably faced him in another, throughout a land of freedom and amongst spirits as haughty as his own. He was a true feudal chieftain; and, in the very approaches to his mansion, in the style of his equipage, or whatever else was likely to meet the public eye, he delighted to express his disdain of modern refinements, and the haughty carelessness of his magnificence. The coach in which he used to visit Penrith, the nearest town to his principal house of Lowther, was old and neglected; his horses fine, but untrimmed; and such was the impression diffused about him by his gloomy temper and his habits of oppression, that the streets were silent as he traversed them, and an awe sat upon many faces (so, at least, I have heard a Penrith contemporary of the old despot declare), pretty much like that which may be supposed to attend the entry into a guilty town of some royal commission for trying state criminals. In his park you saw some of the most magnificent timber in the kingdom — trees that were coeval with the feuds of York and Lancaster, yews that possibly had furnished bows to Cœur de Lion, and oaks that might have built a navy. All was savage grandeur about these native forests: their sweeping lawns and glades had been unapproached, for centuries it might be, by the hand of art; and amongst them roamed — not the timid fallow deer — but thundering droves of wild horses.

Lord Lonsdale went to London less frequently than else he might have done, because at home he was allowed to forget that in this world there was any greater man than himself. Even in London, however, his haughty injustice found occasions for making itself known. On a court day (I revive an anecdote once familiarly known) St. James's Street was lined by cavalry, and the orders were peremptory that no carriages should be allowed to pass, except those which were carrying parties to court. Whether it were by accident or by way of wilfully provoking such a collision, Lord Lonsdale's carriage advanced; and the coachman, in obedience

to orders shouted out from the window, was turning down the forbidden route, when a trooper rode up to the horses' heads, and stopped them; the thundering menaces of Lord Lonsdale perplexed the soldier, who did not know but he might be bringing himself into a scrape by persisting in his opposition; but the officer on duty, observing the scene, rode up, and, in a determined tone, enforced the order, causing two of his men to turn the horses' heads round into Piccadilly. Lord Lonsdale threw his card to the officer, and a duel followed; in which, however, the outrageous injustice of his lordship met with a pointed rebuke; for the first person whom he summoned to his aid, in the quality of second, though a friend, and, I believe, a relative of his own, declined to sanction by any interference so scandalous a quarrel with an officer for simply executing an official duty. In this dilemma (for probably he was aware that few military men would fail to take the same disapproving view of the affair) he applied to the present Earl of Lonsdale, then Sir William Lowther. Either there must have been some needless discourtesy in the officer's mode of fulfilling his duty, or else Sir William thought the necessity of the case, however wantonly provoked, a sufficient justification for a relative giving his assistance, even under circumstances of such egregious injustice. At any rate, it is due to Sir William, in mere candour, to suppose that he did nothing in this instance but what his conscience approved; seeing that in all others his conduct has been such as to win him the universal respect of the two counties in which he is best known. He it was that acted as second; and, by a will which is said to have been dated the same day, he became eventually possessed of a large property, which did not necessarily accompany the title.

Another anecdote is told of the same Lord Lonsdale, which expresses, in a more eccentric way, and a way that to many people will be affecting — to some shocking — the moody energy of his passions. He loved, with passionate fervour, a fine young woman, of humble parentage, in a Cumberland farmhouse. Her he had persuaded to leave her father, and put herself under his protection. Whilst yet young and beautiful, she died: Lord Lonsdale's sorrow was profound; he could not bear the thought of a final parting from that face which had become so familiar to his heart: he caused her to be embalmed; a glass placed over her features; and at intervals, when his thoughts reverted to her memory, he found a consolation (or perhaps a luxurious irritation) of his sorrow in visiting this sad memorial of his former happiness. This story, which I have often heard repeated by the country-people of Cumberland, strengthened the general feeling of this eccentric nobleman's self-willed character, though in this instance complicated with a trait of character that argued nobler capacities. By what rules he guided himself in dealing with the various lawyers, agents, or stewards whom his extensive estates brought into a dependency upon his justice or his moderation — whether, in fact, he had no

rule, but left all to accident or caprice — I have never learned. Generally, I have heard it said that in some years of his life he resisted the payment of all bills indiscriminately which he had any colourful plea for supposing to contain overcharges; some fared ill, because they were neighbours, and his lordship could say that “he knew them to be knaves”; others fared worse, because they were so remote that “how could his lordship know what they were?” Of this number, and possibly for this reason left unpaid, was Wordsworth’s father. He died whilst his four sons and one daughter were yet helpless children, leaving to them respectable fortunes, but which, as yet, were unrealized and tolerably hypothetic, as they happened to depend upon so shadowy a basis as the justice of Lord Lonsdale. The executors of the will, and trustees of the children’s interests, in one point acted wisely: foreseeing the result of a legal contest with so potent a defendant as this leviathan of two counties, and that, under any nominal ward, the whole estate of the orphans might be swallowed up in the costs of any suit that should be carried into Chancery, they prudently withdrew from all active measures of opposition, confiding the event to Lord Lonsdale’s returning sense of justice. Unfortunately for that nobleman’s reputation, and also, as was thought, for the children’s prosperity, before this somewhat rusty quality of justice could have time to operate, his lordship died.

However, for once the world was wrong in its malicious anticipations: the successor to Lord Lonsdale’s titles and Cumberland estates was made aware of the entire case, in all its circumstances; and he very honourably gave directions for full restitution being made. This was done; and in one respect the result was more fortunate for the children than if they had been trained from youth to rely upon their expectations: for, by the time this repayment was made, three out of the five children were already settled in life, with the very amplest prospects opening before them — so ample as to make their private patrimonial fortunes of inconsiderable importance in their eyes; and very probably the withholding of their inheritance it was, however unjust, and however little contemplated as an occasion of any such effect, that urged these three persons to the exertions requisite for their present success. Two only of the children remained to whom the restoration of their patrimony was a matter of grave importance; but it was precisely those two whom no circumstances could have made independent of their hereditary means by personal exertions — viz. William Wordsworth, the poet, and Dorothy, the sole daughter of the house. The three others were: — Richard, the eldest: he had become a thriving solicitor, at one of the inns of court in London; and, if he died only moderately rich, and much below the expectations of his acquaintance, in the final result of his laborious life, it was because he was moderate in his desires, and, in his later years, reverted to the pastoral region of his infancy and boyhood, chose rather to sit down by a hearth of his own amongst the Cumberland

mountains, and wisely to woo the deities of domestic pleasures and health, than to follow the chase after wealth in the feverish crowds of the capital. The third son (I believe) was Christopher (Dr. Wordsworth), who, at an early age, became a man of importance in the English Church, being made one of the chaplains and librarians of the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Manners Sutton, father of the late Speaker, Lord Canterbury). He has since risen to the important and dignified station — once held by Barrow, and afterwards by Bentley — of Master of Trinity in Cambridge. Trinity in Oxford is not a first-rate college; but Trinity, Cambridge, answers in rank and authority to Christ Church in Oxford; and to be the head of that college is rightly considered a very splendid distinction.

Dr. Wordsworth has distinguished himself as an author by a very useful republication, entitled, "Ecclesiastical Biography," which he has enriched with valuable notes. And in his own person, besides other works more professional, he is the author of one very interesting work of historical research upon the difficult question of "Who wrote the 'Eicon Basilike'?" a question still unsettled, but much nearer to a settlement, in consequence of the strong presumptions which Dr. Wordsworth has adduced on behalf of the King's claim.

The fourth and youngest son, John, was in the service of the East India Company, and perished most unhappily, at the very outset of the voyage which he had meant to be his last, off the coast of Dorsetshire, in the Company's ship *Abergavenny*. A calumny was current in some quarters, that Captain Wordsworth was in a state of intoxication at the time of the calamity. But the printed report of the affair, revised by survivors, entirely disproves this calumny; which, besides, was in itself incredible to all who were acquainted with Captain Wordsworth's most temperate and even philosophic habits of life. So peculiarly, indeed, was Captain Wordsworth's temperament, and the whole system of his life, coloured by a grave and meditative turn of thought, that amongst his brother officers in the Company's service he bore the surname of "The Philosopher." And William Wordsworth, the poet, not only always spoke of him with a sort of respect that argued him to have been no ordinary man, but he has frequently assured me of one fact which, as implying some want of sincerity in himself, gave me pain to hear — viz. that in the fine lines entitled "The Happy Warrior," reciting the main elements which enter into the composition of a hero, he had in view chiefly his brother John's character. That was true, I daresay, but it was inconsistent in some measure with the note attached to the lines, by which the reader learns that it was out of reverence for Lord Nelson, as one who transcended the estimate here made, that the poem had not been openly connected with his name, as the real suggester of the thoughts. Now, privately, though still professing a lively admiration for the mighty Admiral, as one of the few men who carried into his professional labours a real and vivid genius

(and thus far Wordsworth often testified a deep admiration for Lord Nelson), yet, in reference to these particular lines, he uniformly declared that Lord Nelson was much below the ideal there contemplated, and that, in fact, it had been suggested by the recollection of his brother. But, if so, why should it have been dissembled? And surely, in some of the finest passages, this cannot be so; for example, when he makes it one trait of the heaven-born hero that he, if called upon to face some mighty day of trial —

*“To which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad, for human kind —
Is happy as a lover, and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired” —*

then, at least, he must have had Lord Nelson's idea predominating in his thoughts; for Captain Wordsworth was scarcely tried in such a situation. There can be no doubt, however, that he merited the praises of his brother; and it was indeed an idle tale that he should first of all deviate from this philosophic temperance upon an occasion where his utmost energies and the fullest self-possession were all likely to prove little enough. In reality it was the pilot, the incompetent pilot, who caused the fatal catastrophe: — “O pilot, you have ruined me!” were amongst the last words that Captain Wordsworth was heard to utter — pathetic words, and fit for him, “a meek man and a brave,” to use in addressing a last reproach to one who, not through misfortune or overruling will of Providence, but through miserable conceit and unprincipled levity, had brought total ruin upon so many gallant countrymen. Captain Wordsworth might have saved his own life; but the perfect loyalty of his nature to the claims upon him, that sublime fidelity to duty which is so often found amongst men of his profession, kept him to the last upon the wreck; and, after *that*, it is probable that the almost total wreck of his own fortunes (which, but for this overthrow, would have amounted to twenty thousand pounds, upon the successful termination of this one voyage), but still more the total ruin of the new and splendid Indiaman confided to his care, had so much dejected his spirits that he was not in a condition for making such efforts as, under a more hopeful prospect, he might have been able to make. Six weeks his body lay unrecovered; at the end of that time, it was found, and carried to the Isle of Wight, and buried in close neighbourhood to the quiet fields which he had so recently described in letters to his sister at Grasmere as a Paradise of English peace, to which his mind would be likely oftentimes to revert amidst the agitations of the sea.

Such were the modes of life pursued by three of the orphan children: such the termination of life to the youngest. Meantime, the one daughter of the house was read liberally, in the family of a relative at Windsor; and she might have pursued a quiet and decorous career, of a character, per-

haps, somewhat tame, under the same dignified auspices; but, at an early age, the good angel threw open to her a vista of nobler prospects, in the opportunity which then arose, and which she did not hesitate to seize, of becoming the companion, through a life of delightful wanderings — of what, to her more elevated friends, seemed little short of vagrancy — the companion and confidential friend, and, with a view to the enlargement of her own intellect, the pupil, of a brother, the most original and most meditative man of his own age.

William had passed his infancy on the very margin of the Lake District, just six miles, in fact, beyond the rocky screen of Whinlatter, and within one hour's ride of Bassenthwaite Water. To those who live in the tame scenery of Cockermouth, the blue mountains in the distance, the sublime peaks of Borrowdale and of Buttermere, raised aloft a signal, as it were, of a new country, a country of romance and mystery, to which the thoughts are habitually turning. Children are fascinated and haunted with vague temptations, when standing on the frontiers of such a foreign land; and so was Wordsworth fascinated, so haunted. Fortunate for Wordsworth that, at an early age, he was transferred to a quiet nook of this lovely district. At the little town of Hawkshead, seated on the north-west angle of Esthwaite Water, a grammar-school (which, in English usage, means a school for classical literature) was founded, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, by Archibishop Sandys, who belonged to the very ancient family of that name still seated in the neighbourhood. Hither were sent all the four brothers; and here it was that Wordsworth passed his life, from the age of nine until the time arrived for his removal to college. Taking into consideration the peculiar tastes of the person, and the peculiar advantages of the place, I conceive that no pupil of a public school can ever have passed a more luxurious boyhood than Wordsworth. The school discipline was not by many evidences very strict; the mode of living out of school very much resembled that of Eton for Oppidans; less elegant, no doubt, and less costly in its provisions for accommodation, but not less comfortable, and, in that part of the arrangements which was chiefly Etonian, even more so; for in both places the boys, instead of being gathered into one fold, and at night into one or two huge dormitories, were distributed amongst motherly old "dames," technically so called at Eton, but not at Hawkshead. In the latter place, agreeably to the inferior scale of the whole establishment, the houses were smaller, and more cottage-like, consequently more like private households: and the old lady of the *ménage* was more constantly amongst them, providing, with maternal tenderness and with a professional pride, for the comfort of her young flock, and protecting the weak from oppression. The humble cares to which poor matrons dedicated themselves may be collected from several allusions scattered through the poems of Wordsworth; that entitled "Nutting," for instance, in which his own early Spinosistic feeling is in-

roduced, of a mysterious presence diffused through the solitudes of woods, a presence that was disturbed by the intrusion of careless and noisy outrage, and which is brought into a strong relief by the previous homely picture of the old housewife equipping her young charge with beggar's weeds, in order to prepare him for a struggle with thorns and brambles. Indeed, not only the moderate rank of the boys, and the peculiar kind of relation assumed by these matrons, equally suggested this humble class of motherly attentions, but the whole spirit of the place and neighbourhood was favourable to an old English homeliness of domestic and personal economy. Hawkshead, most fortunately for its own manners and the primitive style of its habits even to this day, stands about six miles out of the fashionable line for the "Lakers."

Esthwaite, though a lovely scene in its summer garniture of woods, has no features of permanent grandeur to rely upon. A wet or gloomy day, even in summer, reduces it to little more than a wildish pond, surrounded by miniature hills: and the sole circumstances which restore the sense of a romantic region and an Alpine character are the towering groups of Langdale and Grasmere fells, which look over the little pastoral barriers of Esthwaite, from distances of eight, ten, and fourteen miles. Esthwaite, therefore, being no object for itself, and the sublime head of Conistone being accessible by road which evades Hawkshead, few tourists ever trouble the repose of this little village town. And in the days of which I am speaking (1778-1787) tourists were as yet few and infrequent to *any* parts of the country. Mrs. Radcliffe had not begun to cultivate the sense of the picturesque in her popular romances; guide-books, with the sole exception of "Gray's Posthumous Letters," had not arisen to direct public attention to this domestic Calabria; roads were rude, and, in many instances, not wide enough to admit post-chaises; but, above all, the whole system of travelling accommodations was barbarous and antediluvian for the requisitions of the pampered south. As yet the land had rest; the annual fever did not shake the very hills; and (which was the happiest immunity of the whole) false taste, the pseudo-romantic rage, had not violated the most awful solitudes amongst the ancient hills by opera-house decorations. Wordsworth, therefore, enjoyed this labyrinth of valleys in a perfection that no one can have experience since the opening of the present century. The whole was one paradise of virgin beauty; the rare works of man, all over the land, were hoar with the grey tints of an antique picturesque; nothing was new, nothing was raw and uncitrized. Hawkshead, in particular, though tamely seated in itself and its immediate purlieus, has a most fortunate and central locality, as regards the best (at least the most interesting) scenes for a pedestrian Rambler. The gorgeous scenery of Borrowdale, the austere sublimities of Wastdalehead, of Langdalehead, or Mardale—these are too oppressive, in their colossal proportions and their utter solitudes, for encouraging a perfectly human interest. Now, taking

Hawkshead as a centre, with a radius of about eight miles, one might describe a little circular tract which embosoms a perfect network of little valleys — separate wards or cells, at it were, of one larger valley, walled in by the great leading mountains of the region. Grasmere, Easedale, Great and Little Langdale, Tilberthwaite, Yewdale, Elter Water, Loughrigg Tarn, Skelwith, and many other little quiet nooks, lie within a single division of this labyrinthine district. All these are within one summer afternoon's ramble. And amongst these, for the years of his boyhood, lay the daily excursions of Wordsworth.

I do not conceive that Wordsworth *could* have been an amiable boy; he was austere and unsocial, I have reason to think, in his habits; not generous; and not self-denying. I am pretty certain that no consideration would ever have induced Wordsworth to burden himself with a lady's reticule, parasol, shawl, or anything exacting trouble and attention. Mighty must be the danger which would induce him to lead her horse by the bridle. Nor would he, without some demur, stop to offer her his hand over a stile. Freedom — unlimited, careless, insolent freedom — unoccupied possession of his own arms — absolute control of his own legs and motions — these have always been so essential to his comfort, that, in any case where they were likely to become questionable, he would have declined to make one of the party. Meantime, we are not to suppose that Wordsworth the boy expressly sought for solitary scenes of nature amongst woods and mountains with a direct conscious anticipation of imaginative pleasure, and loving them with a pure, disinterested love, on their own separate account. These are feelings beyond boyish nature, or, at all events, beyond boyish nature trained amidst the selfishness of social intercourse. Wordsworth, like his companions, haunted the hills and the vales for the sake of angling, snaring birds, swimming, and sometimes of hunting, according to the Westmoreland fashion (or the Irish fashion in Galway), on foot; for riding to the chase is quite impossible, from the precipitous nature of the ground. It was in the course of these pursuits, by an indirect effect growing gradually upon him, that Wordsworth became a passionate lover of nature, at the time when the growth of his intellectual faculties made it possible that he should combine those thoughtful passions with the experience of the eye and the ear.

One of the most interesting among the winter amusements of the Hawkshead boys was that of skating on the adjacent lake. Esthwaite Water is not one of the deep lakes, as its neighbours of Windermere, Coniston, and Grasmere are; consequently, a very slight duration of frost is sufficient to freeze it into a bearing strength. In this respect Wordsworth found the same advantages in his boyhood as afterwards at the University; for the county of Cambridge is generally liable to shallow waters; and that University breeds more good skaters than all the rest of England. About the year 1810, by way of expressing an interest in "The Friend," which

was just at that time appearing in weekly numbers, Wordsworth allowed Coleridge to print an extract from the poem on his own life, descriptive of the games celebrated upon the ice of Esthwaite by all who were able to skate: the mimic chases of hare and hounds, pursued long after the last orange gleam of light had died away from the western horizon — oftentimes far into the night; a circumstance which does not speak much for the discipline of the schools, or rather, perhaps, *does* speak much for the advantages of a situation so pure, and free from the usual perils of a town, as could allow of a discipline so lax. Wordsworth, in this fine descriptive passage — which I wish that I had at this moment the means of citing, in order to amplify my account of his earliest tyrocinium — speaks of himself as frequently wheeling aside from his joyous companions to cut across the image of a star; and thus, already in the midst of sportiveness, and by a movement of sportiveness, half unconsciously to himself expressing the growing necessity of retirement to his habits of thought. At another period of the year, when the golden summer allowed the students a long season of early play before the studies of the day began, he describes himself as roaming, hand-in-hand, with one companion, along the banks of Esthwaite Water, chanting, with one voice, the verses of Goldsmith and of Gray — verses which, at the time of recording the fact, he had come to look upon as either in parts false in the principles of their composition, or, at any rate, as far below the tone of high poetic passion; but which, at that time of life, when the profounder feelings were as yet only germinating, filled them with an enthusiasm

“More bright than madness and the dreams of wine.”

Meanwhile, how prospered the classical studies which formed the main business of Wordsworth at Hawkshead? Not, in all probability, very well; for, though Wordsworth finally became a very sufficient master of the Latin language, and read certain favourite authors, especially Horace, with a critical nicety, and with a feeling for the felicities of his composition, I have reason to think that little of this skill had been obtained at Hawkshead. As to Greek, that is a language which Wordsworth never had energy enough to cultivate with effect.

From Hawkshead, and, I believe, after he had entered his eighteenth year (a time which is tolerably early on the English plan), probably at the latter end of the year 1787, Wordsworth entered at St. John's College, Cambridge. St. John's ranks as the second college in Cambridge — the second as to numbers, and influence, and general consideration; in the estimation of the Johnians as the first, or at least as co-equal in all things with Trinity; from which, at any rate, the general reader will collect that no such absolute supremacy is accorded to any society in Cambridge as in Oxford is accorded necessarily to Christ Church. The advantages of a large college are considerable, both to the idle man, who wishes to lurk unnoticed in

the crowd, and to the brilliant man, whose vanity could not be gratified by pre-eminence amongst the few. Wordsworth, though not idle as regarded his own pursuits, was so as regarded the pursuits of the place. With respect to them he felt — to use his own words — that his hour was not come; and that his doom for the present was a happy obscurity, which left him, unvexed by the torrents of competition, to the genial enjoyment of life in its most genial hours.

It will excite some astonishment when I mention that, on coming to Cambridge, Wordsworth actually assumed the beau, or, in modern slang, the "dandy." He dressed in silk stockings, had his hair powdered, and in all things plumed himself on his gentlemanly habits. To those who remember the slovenly dress of his middle and philosophic life, this will furnish matter for a smile.

Stranger still it is to tell that, for the first time in his life, Wordsworth became inebriated at Cambridge. It is but fair to add that the first time was also the last time. But perhaps the strangest part of the story is the occasion of this drunkenness; which was in celebration of his first visit to the very rooms at Christ College once occupied by Milton — intoxication by way of homage to the most temperate of men; and this homage offered by one who has turned out himself to the full as temperate! Every man, meantime, who is not a churl, must grant a privilege and charter of large enthusiasm to such an occasion. And an older man than Wordsworth (at that era not fully nineteen), and a man even without a poet's blood in his veins, might have leave to forget his sobriety in such circumstances. Besides which, after all, I have heard from Wordsworth's own lips that he was not too far gone to attend chapel decorously during the very acmé of his elevation.

The rooms which Wordsworth occupied at St. John's were singularly circumstanced; mementoes of what is highest and what is lowest in human things solicited the eye and the ear all day long. If the occupant approached the outdoors prospect, in one direction, there was visible, through the great windows in the adjacent chapel of Trinity, the statue of Newton "with his silent face and prism," memorials of the abstracting intellect, serene and absolute, emancipated from fleshly bonds. On the other, immediately below, stood the college kitchen; and, in that region, "from noon to dewy eve," resounded the shrill voice of scolding from the female ministers of the head cook, never suffering the mind to forget one of the meanest amongst human necessities. Wordsworth, however, as one who passed much of his time in social gaiety, was less in the way of this annoyance than a profounder student would have been. Probably he studied little beyond French and Italian during his Cambridge life; not, however, at any time forgetting (as I had so much reason to complain, when speaking of my Oxonian contemporaries) the literature of his own country. It is true that he took the regular degree of A.B., and in the

regular course; but this was won in those days by a mere nominal examination, unless where the mathematical attainments of the student prompted his ambition to contest the splendid distinction of Senior Wrangler. This, in common with all other honours of the University, is won in our days with far severer effort than in that age of relaxed discipline; but at no period could it have been won, let the malicious say what they will, without an amount of mathematical skill very much beyond what has ever been exacted of its *alumni* by any other European University. Wordsworth was a profound admirer of the sublimer mathematics; at least of the higher geometry. The secret of this admiration for geometry lay in the antagonism between this world of bodiless abstraction and the world of passion. And here I may mention appropriately, and I hope without any breach of confidence, that, in a great philosophic poem of Wordsworth's, which is still in MS., and will remain in MS. until after his death, there is, at the opening of one of the books, a dream, which reaches the very *ne plus ultra* of sublimity, in my opinion, expressly framed to illustrate the eternity, and the independence of all social modes or fashions of existence, conceded to these two hemispheres, as it were, that compose the total world of human power — mathematics on the one hand, poetry on the other.

I scarcely know whether I am entitled to quote — as my memory (though not refreshed by a sight of the poem for more than twenty years) would well enable me to do — any long extract; but thus much I may allowably say, as it cannot in any way affect Mr. Wordsworth's interests, that the form of the dream is as follows; and, by the way, even this form is not arbitrary; but, with exquisite skill in the art of composition, is made to arise out of the situation in which the poet had previously found himself, and is faintly prefigured in the elements of that situation. He had been reading "Don Quixote" by the seaside; and, oppressed by the heat of the sun, he had fallen asleep, whilst gazing on the barren sands before him. Even in these circumstances of the case — as, first, the adventurous and half-lunatic knight riding about the world, on missions of universal philanthropy, and, secondly, the barren sands of the sea-shore — one may read the germinal principles of the dream. He dreams that, walking in some sandy wilderness of Africa, some endless Zahara, he sees at a distance

*"An Arab of the desert, lance in rest,
Mounted upon a dromedary."*

The Arab rides forward to meet him; and the dreamer perceives, in the countenance of the rider, the agitation of fear, and that he often looks behind him in a troubled way, whilst in his hand he holds two books — one of which is "Euclid's Elements"; the other (which is a book and yet not a book) seeming, in fact, a shell as well as a book — seeming

neither, and yet both at once. The Arab directs him to apply the shell to his ear; upon which,

"In an unknown tongue, which yet I understood,"

the dreamer says that he heard

*"A wild prophetic blast of harmony,
An ode, as if in passion utter'd, that foretold
Destruction to the people of this earth
By deluge near at hand."*

The Arab, with grave countenance, assures him that it is even so; that all was true which had been said; and that he himself was riding upon a divine mission, having it in charge

*"To bury those two books;
The one that held acquaintance with the stars,
. . . undisturb'd by Space or Time;
The other, that was a god, yea, many gods,
Had voices more than all the winds, and was
A joy, a consolation, and a hope!"*

That is, in effect, his mission is to secure the two great interests of poetry and mathematics from sharing in the watery ruin. As he talks, suddenly the dreamer perceives that the Arab's "countenance grew more disturbed," and that his eye was often reverted; upon which the dreaming poet also looks along the desert in the same direction; and in the far horizon he descries "a glittering light." What is it? he asks of the Arab rider. "It is," said the Arab, "the waters of the earth," that even then were travelling on their awful errand. Upon which, the poet sees this apostle of the desert riding

*"Hurrying o'er the illimitable waste,
With the fleet waters of a drowning world
In chase of him: whereat I [meaning the poet] waked in terror,
And saw the sea before me, and the book
In which I had been reading at my side."*

The sketch I have here given of this sublime dream sufficiently attests the interest which Wordsworth took in the mathematic studies of the place, and the exalted privilege which he ascribed to them of co-eternity with "the vision and the faculty divine" of the poet — the destiny common to both, of an endless triumph over the ruins of nature and of time. Meantime, he himself travelled no farther in these studies than through the six elementary books usually selected from the fifteen of Euclid. Whatever might be the interests of his speculative understanding, whatever

his admiration, practically he devoted himself to the more agitating interests of man, social and political, just then commencing that vast career of revolution which has never since been still or stationary; interests which in his mind alternated, nevertheless, with another and different interest, in the grander forms of external nature, as found amongst mountains and forests. In obedience to this latter passion it was — for a passion it had become — that during one of his long Cambridge vacations, stretching from June to November, he went over to Switzerland and Savoy, for a pedestrian excursion amongst the Alps; taking with him for his travelling companion a certain Mr. J——, of whom (excepting that he is once apostrophized in a sonnet, written at Calais in the year 1802) I never happened to hear him speak: whence I presume to infer that Mr. J—— owed this flattering distinction, not so much to any intellectual graces of his society, as, perhaps, to his powers of administering “punishment” (in the language of the “fancy”) to restive and mutinous landlords; for such were abroad in those days, — people who presented huge reckonings with one hand, and with the other a huge cudgel, by way of opening the traveller’s eyes to the propriety of settling them without demur, and without discount. I do not positively know this to have been the case; but I have heard Wordsworth speak of the ruffian landlords who played upon his youth in the Grisons; and, however well qualified to fight his own battles, he might find, amongst such savage mountaineers, two combatants better than one.

Wordsworth’s route, on this occasion, lay at first through Austrian Flanders, then (1788, I think) on the fret for an insurrectionary war against the capricious innovations of the imperial coxcomb, Joseph II. He passed through the camps then forming, and thence ascended the Rhine to Switzerland; crossed the Great St. Bernard, visited the Lake of Como, and other interesting scenes in the north of Italy, where, by the way, the tourists were benighted in a forest — having, in some way or other, been misled by the Italian clocks and their peculiar fashion of striking round to twenty-four o’clock. On his return, Wordsworth published a quarto pamphlet of verses, describing, with very considerable effect and brilliancy, the grand scenery amongst which he had been moving. This poem, as well as another in the same quarto form, describing the English lake scenery of Westmoreland and Cumberland, addressed by way of letter “to a young lady” (viz., Miss Wordsworth), are remarkable, in the first place, as the earliest effort of Wordsworth in verse, at least as his earliest publication; but, in the second place, and still more so, from their style of composition. “Pure description,” even where it cannot be said, sneeringly, “to hold the place of sense,” is so little attractive as the direct exclusive object of a poem, and in reality it exacts so powerful an effort on the part of the reader to realize visually, or make into an apprehensible unity, the scattered elements and circumstances of external landscapes painted only

by words, that, inevitably, and reasonably, it can never hope to be a popular form of composition; else it is highly probable that these "Descriptive Sketches" of Wordsworth, though afterwards condemned as vicious in their principles of composition by his own maturer taste, would really have gained him a high momentary notoriety with the public, had they been fairly brought under its notice; whilst, on the other hand, his revolutionary principles of composition, and his purer taste, ended in obtaining for him nothing but scorn and ruffian insolence. This seems marvellous; but, in fact, it is not so: it seems, I mean, *primâ facie*, marvellous that the inferior models should be fitted to gain a far higher reputation; but the secret lies here — that these were in a style of composition which, if sometimes false, had been long reconciled to the public feelings, and which, besides, have a specific charm for certain minds, even apart from all fashions of the day; whereas, his later poems had to struggle against sympathies long trained in an opposite direction, to which the recovery of a healthier tone (even where nature had made it possible) presupposed a difficult process of weaning, and an effort of discipline for re-organizing the whole internal economy of the sensibilities that is both painful and mortifying: for — and that is worthy of deep attention — the misgivings of any vicious or unhealthy state, the impulses and suspicious gleams of the truth struggling with cherished error, the instincts of light conflicting with darkness — these are the real causes of that hatred and intolerant scorn which is ever awakened by the first dawnings of new and important systems of truth. Therefore it is, that Christianity was so much more hated than any mere variety of error. Therefore are the first feeble struggles of nature towards a sounder state of health always harsh and painful; for the false system which this change for the better disturbs had, at least, this soothing advantage — that it was self-consistent. Therefore, also, was the Wordsworthian restoration of elementary power, and of a higher or transcendent truth of nature (or, as some people vaguely expressed the case, of *simplicity*), received at first with such malignant disgust. For there was a galvanic awakening in the shock of power, as it jarred against the ancient system of prejudices, which inevitably revealed so much of truth as made the mind jealous; enlightened it enough to descry its own wanderings, but not enough to recover the right road. The more energetic, the more spasmodically potent, are the throes of nature towards her own re-establishment in the cases of suspended animation — by drowning, strangling, etc. — the more keen is the anguish of revival. And, universally, a transition state is a state of suffering and disquiet. Meantime, the early poems of Wordsworth, that *might* have suited the public taste so much better than his more serious efforts, if the fashion of the hour, or the sanction of a leading review, or the *prestige* of a name, had happened to bring them under the public eye, did, in fact, drop unnoticed into the market. Nowhere have I seen them quoted — no, not even since the

author's victorious establishment in the public admiration. The reason may be, however, that not many copies were printed at first; no subsequent edition was ever called for; and yet, from growing interest in the author, every copy of the small impression had been studiously bought up. Indeed, I myself went to the publisher's (Johnson's) as early as 1805 or 1806, and bought up all the remaining copies (which were but six or seven of the Foreign Sketches, and two or three of the English), as presents, and as *future* curiosities in literature to literary friends whose interest in Wordsworth might assure one of a due value being put upon the poems. Were it not for this extreme scarcity, I am disposed to think that many lines or passages would long ere this have been made familiar to the public ear. Some are delicately, some forcibly picturesque; and the selection of circumstances is occasionally very original and felicitous. In particular, I remember this one, which presents an accident in rural life that must by thousands of repetitions have become intimately known to every dweller in the country, and yet had never before been consciously taken up for a poet's use. After having described the domestic cock as "sweetly ferocious" — a prettiness of phraseology which he borrows from an Italian author — he notices those competitions or defiances which are so often carried on interchangeably between barn-door cocks from great distances —

"Echoed by faintly answering farms remote."

This is a beautiful line in which he has caught and preserved so ordinary an occurrence — one, in fact, of the commonplaces which lend animation and a moral interest to rural life.

After his return from this Swiss excursion, Wordsworth took up his parting residence at Cambridge, and prepared for a final adieu to academic pursuits and academic society.

It was about this period that the French Revolution broke out; and the reader who would understand its appalling effects — its convulsing, revolutionary effects upon Wordsworth's heart and soul — should consult the history of the Solitary, as given by himself in "The Excursion"; for that picture is undoubtedly a leaf from the personal experience of Wordsworth —

"From that dejection I was roused — but how?"

Mighty was the transformation which it wrought in the whole economy of his thoughts; miraculous almost was the expansion which it gave to his human sympathies; chiefly in this it showed its effects — in throwing the thoughts inwards into grand meditations upon man, his final destiny, his ultimate capacities of elevation; and, secondly, in giving to the whole system of the thoughts and feelings a firmer tone, and a sense of the awful *realities* which surround the mind; by comparison with which the previous literary tastes seemed (even where they were fine and elegant, as in Collins

or Gray, unless where they had the self-sufficing reality of religion, as in Cowper) fanciful and trivial. In all lands this result was accomplished, and at the same time: Germany, above all, found her new literature the mere creation and rebound of this great moral tempest; and, in Germany or England alike, the poetry was entirely regenerated, thrown into moulds of thought and of feeling so new, that the poets everywhere felt themselves to be putting away childish things, and now first, among those of their own century, entering upon the dignity and the sincere thinking of mature manhood.

Wordsworth, it is well known to all who know anything of his history, felt himself so fascinated by the gorgeous festival era of the Revolution — that era when the sleeping snakes which afterwards stung the national felicity were yet covered with flowers — that he went over to Paris, and spent about one entire year between that city, Orléans, and Blois. There, in fact, he continued to reside almost too long. He had been sufficiently connected with public men to have drawn upon himself some notice from those who afterwards composed the Committee of Public Safety. And, as an Englishman, when that partiality began to droop which at an earlier period had protected the English name, he became an object of gloomy suspicion with those even who would have grieved that he should fall a victim to undistinguishing popular violence. Already *for* England, and in her behalf, he was thought to be that spy which (as Coleridge tells us in his “*Biographia Literaria*”) afterwards he was accounted by Mr. Pitt’s emissaries, in the worst of services *against* her. I doubt, however (let me say it without impeachment of Coleridge’s veracity — for he was easily duped), this whole story about Mr. Pitt’s Somersetshire spies; and it has often struck me with astonishment that Coleridge should have suffered his personal pride to take so false a direction as to court the humble distinction of having been suspected as a conspirator, in those very years when poor empty tympanies of men, such as Thelwall, Holcroft, etc., were actually recognized as enemies of the state, and worthy of a state surveillance, by ministers so blind and grossly misinformed as, on this point, were Pitt and Dundas. Had I been Coleridge, instead of saving Mr. Pitt’s reputation with posterity, by ascribing to him a jealousy which he or his agents had not the discernment to cherish, I would have boldly planted myself upon the fact, the killing fact, that he had utterly ignored both myself (Coleridge, to wit) and Wordsworth. Even with Dogberry, *I* would have insisted upon that — “Set down, also, that I am an ass!” Clamorous should have been my exultation in this fact.

In France, however, Wordsworth had a chance, in good earnest, of passing for the traitor that, in England, no rational person ever thought him. He had chosen his friends carelessly; nor could any man, the most sagacious, have chosen them safely, in a time when the internal schisms of the very same general party brought with them worse hostilities and more

personal perils than even, upon the broader divisions of party, could have attended the most *ultra* professions of anti-national politics, and when the rapid changes of position shifted the peril from month to month. One individual is especially recorded by Wordsworth, in the poem on his own life, as a man of the highest merit, and personal qualities the most brilliant, who ranked first upon the list of Wordsworth's friends; and this man was so far a safe friend, at one moment, as he was a republican general — finally, indeed, a commander-in-chief. This was Beaupuis; and the description of his character and position is singularly interesting. There is, in fact, a special value and a use about the case; it opens one's eyes feelingly to the fact that, even in this thoughtless people, so full of vanity and levity, nevertheless, the awful temper of the times, and the dread burden of human interests with which it was charged, had called to a consciousness of new duties, had summoned to an audit, as if at some great final tribunal, even the gay, radiant creatures that, under less solemn auspices, under the reign of a Francis I or a Louis XIV, would have been the merest painted butterflies of the court sunshine. This Beaupuis was a man of superb person — beautiful in a degree which made him a painter's model, both as to face and figure; and, accordingly, in a land where conquests of that nature were so easy, and the subjects of so trifling an effort, he had been distinguished, to his own as well as the public eyes, by a rapid succession of *bonnes fortunes* amongst women. Such, and so glorified by triumphs the most unquestionable and flattering, had the earthquake of the Revolution found him. From that moment he had no leisure, not a thought, to bestow upon his former selfish and frivolous pursuits. He was hurried, as one inspired by some high apostolic passion, into the service of the unhappy and desolate serfs amongst his own countrymen — such as are described at an earlier date, by Madame de Sévigné, as the victims of feudal institutions; and one day, as he was walking with Wordsworth in the neighbourhood of Orléans, and they had turned into a little quiet lane, leading off from a heath, suddenly they came upon the following spectacle: — A girl, seventeen or eighteen years old, hunger-bitten, and wasted to a meagre shadow, was knitting, in a dejected, drooping way; whilst to her arm was attached, by a rope, the horse, equally famished, that earned the miserable support of her family. Beaupuis comprehended the scene in a moment; and, seizing Wordsworth by the arm, he said, — “Dear English friend! — brother from a nation of freemen! — *that* it is which is the curse of our people, in their widest section; and to cure this it is, as well as to maintain our work against the kings of the earth, that blood must be shed and tears must flow for many years to come!” At that time the Revolution had not fulfilled its tendencies; as yet, the king was on the throne; the fatal 10th of August 1792 had not dawned; and thus far there was safety for a subject of kings. The irresistible stream was hurrying forwards. The king fell; and (to pause for a moment) how

divinely is the fact recorded by Wordsworth, in the MS. poem on his own life, placing the awful scenes past and passing in Paris under a pathetic relief from the description of the golden, autumnal day, sleeping in sunshine —

“ *When I
Towards the fierce metropolis bent my steps,
The homeward road to England. From his throne
The king had fallen,*” etc.

What a picture does he give of the fury which there possessed the public mind; of the frenzy which shone in every eye, and through every gesture; of the stormy groups assembled at the Palais Royal, of the Tuileries, with “hissing factionists” for ever in their centre, “hissing” from the self-baffling of their own madness, and incapable from wrath of speaking clearly; of fear already creeping over the manners of multitudes; of stealthy movements through back streets; plotting and counter-plotting in every family; feuds to extermination, dividing children of the same house for ever; scenes such as those of the Chapel Royal (now silenced on that *public* stage), repeating themselves daily amongst private friends; and, to show the universality of this maniacal possession — that it was no narrow storm discharging its fury by local concentration upon a single city, but that it overspread the whole realm of France — a picture is given, wearing the same features, of what passed daily at Orléans, Blois, and other towns. The citizens are described in the attitudes they assumed at the daily coming in of the post from Paris; the fierce sympathy is portrayed with which they echoed back the feelings of their compatriots in the capital: men of all parties had been there up to this time — aristocrats as well as democrats; and one, in particular, of the former class is put forward as a representative of his class. This man, duly as the hour arrived which brought the Parisian newspapers, read restlessly of the tumults and insults amongst which the Royal Family now passed their days; of the decrees by which his own order were threatened or assailed; of the self-expatriation, now continually swelling in amount, as a measure of despair on the part of myriads, as well priests as gentry — all this and worse he read in public; and still, as he read,

“ *His hand
Haunted his sword, like an uneasy spot
In his own body.*”

In short, as there never has been so strong a national convulsion diffused so widely, with equal truth it may be asserted, that no describer, so powerful, or idealizing so magnificently what he deals with, has ever been a real living spectator of parallel scenes. The French, indeed, it may be said, are far enough from being a people profound in feeling. True; but,

of all people, they most exhibit their feeling on the surface; are the most *demonstrative* (to use a modern term) and most of all (except Italians) mark their feelings by outward expression of gesticulation: not to insist upon the obvious truth — that even a people of shallow feeling may be deeply moved by tempests which uproot the forest of a thousand years' growth; by changes in the very organization of society, such as throw all things, for a time, into one vast anarchy; and by murderous passions, alternately the effect and the cause of that same chaotic anarchy. Now, it was in this autumn of 1792, as I have already said, that Wordsworth parted finally from his illustrious friend — for, all things considered, he may be justly so entitled — the gallant Beaupuis. This great season of public trial had searched men's natures; revealed their real hearts; brought into light and action qualities oftentimes not suspected by their possessors; and had thrown men, as in elementary states of society, each upon his own native resources, unaided by the old conventional forces of rank and birth. Beaupuis had shone to unusual advantage under this general trial; he had discovered, even to the philosophic eye of Wordsworth, a depth of benignity very unusual in a Frenchman; and not of local, contracted benignity, but of large, illimitable, apostolic devotion to the service of the poor and the oppressed — a fact the more remarkable as he had all the pretensions in his own person of high birth and high rank, and, so far as he had any personal interest embarked in the struggle, should have allied himself with the aristocracy. But of selfishness in any shape he had no vestiges; or, if he had, it showed itself in a slight tinge of vanity; yet, no — it was not vanity, but a radiant quickness of sympathy with the eye which expressed admiring love — sole relic of the chivalrous devotion once dedicated to the service of ladies. Now, again, he put on the garb of chivalry; it was a chivalry the noblest in the world, which opened his ear to the Pariah and the oppressed all over his misorganized country. A more apostolic fervour of holy zealotry in this great cause had not been seen since the days of Bartholomew las Casas, who showed the same excess of feeling in another direction. This sublime dedication of his being to a cause which, in his conception of it, extinguished all petty considerations for himself, and made him thenceforwards a creature of the national will — “a son of France,” in a more eminent and loftier sense than according to the heraldry of Europe — had extinguished even his sensibility to the voice of worldly honour. “Injuries,” says Wordsworth —

“*Injuries*

Made him more gracious.”

And so utterly had he submitted his own will or separate interests to the transcendent voice of his country, which, in the main, he believed to be now speaking authentically for the first time since the foundations of Christendom, that, even against the motions of his own heart, he adopted

the hatreds of the young republic, growing cruel in his purposes towards the ancient oppressor, out of very excess of love for the oppressed; and, against the voice of his own order, as well as in stern oblivion of many early friendships, he became the champion of democracy in the struggle everywhere commencing with prejudice or feudal privilege. Nay, he went so far upon the line of this new crusade against the evils of the world that he even accepted, with a conscientious defiance of his own quiet homage to the erring spirit of loyalty embarked upon that cause, a commission in the Republican armies preparing to move against La Vendée; and, finally, in that cause, as commander-in-chief, he laid down his life. "He perished," says Wordsworth —

*"He perished fighting, in supreme command,
Upon the banks of the unhappy Loire."*

Homewards fled all the English from a land which now was fast making ready the shambles for its noblest citizens. Thither also came Wordsworth; and there he spent his time for a year and more chiefly in London, overwhelmed with shame and despondency for the disgrace and scandal brought upon Liberty by the atrocities committed in that holy name. Upon this subjects he dwells with deep emotion in the poem on his own life; and he records the awful triumph for retribution accomplished which possessed him when crossing the sands of the great Bay of Morecambe from Lancaster to Ulverstone, and hearing from a horseman who passed him, in reply to the question — *Was there any news?* — "Yes, that Robespierre had perished." Immediately a passion seized him, a transport of almost epileptic fervour, prompting him, as he stood alone upon this perilous waste of sands, to shout aloud anthems of thanksgiving for this great vindication of eternal justice. Still, though justice was done upon one great traitor to the cause, the cause itself was overcast with clouds too heavily to find support and employment for the hopes of a poet who had believed in a golden era ready to open upon the prospects of human nature. It gratified and solaced his heart that the indignation of mankind should have wreaked itself upon the chief monsters that had outraged their nature and their hopes; but for the present he found it necessary to comfort his disappointment by turning away from politics to studies less capable of deceiving his expectations.

From this period, therefore — that is, from the year 1794-95 — we may date the commencement of Wordsworth's entire self-dedication to poetry as the study and main business of his life. Somewhere about this period also (though, according to my remembrance of what Miss Wordsworth once told me, I think one year or so later) his sister joined him; and they began to keep house together: once at Race Down, in Dorsetshire; once at Clevedon, on the coast of Somersetshire; then amongst the Quantock Hills, in the same county, or in that neighbourhood; particularly

at Alfoxton, a beautiful country house, with a grove and shrubbery attached, belonging to Mr. St. Aubyn, a minor, and let (I believe) on the terms of keeping the house in repair. Whilst resident at this last place it was, as I have generally understood, and in the year 1797 or 1798, that Wordsworth first became acquainted with Coleridge; though possibly in the year I am wrong; for it occurs to me that, in a poem of Coleridge's dated in 1796, there is an allusion to a young writer of the name of Wordsworth as one who had something austere in his style, but otherwise was more original than any other poet of the age; and it is probable that this knowledge of the poetry would be subsequent to a personal knowledge of the author, considering the little circulation which any poetry of a Wordsworthian stamp would be likely to attain at that time.

It was at Alfoxton that Miss Mary Hutchinson visited her cousins the Wordsworths, and there, or previously in the north of England, at Stockton-upon-Tees and Darlington, that the attachment began between Miss Mary Hutchinson and Wordsworth which terminated in their marriage about the beginning of the present century. The marriage took place in the north; somewhere, I believe, in Yorkshire; and, immediately after the ceremony, Wordsworth brought his bride to Grasmere; in which most lovely of English valleys he had previously obtained, upon a lease of seven or eight years, the cottage in which I found him living at my first visit to him in November 1807. I have heard that there was a paragraph inserted on this occasion in the "Morning Post" or "Courier" — and I have an indistinct remembrance of having once seen it myself — which described this event of the poet's marriage in the most ludicrous terms of silly pastoral sentimentality; the cottage being described as "the abode of content and all the virtues," the vale itself in the same puerile slang, and the whole event in the style of allegorical trifling about the Muses, etc. The masculine and severe taste of Wordsworth made him peculiarly open to annoyance from such absurd trifling; and, unless his sense of the ludicrous overpowered his graver feelings, he must have been much displeased with the paragraph. But, after all, I have understood that the whole affair was an unseasonable jest of Coleridge's or Lamb's.

To us, who, in after years, were Wordsworth's friends, or, at least, intimate acquaintances — viz., to Professor Wilson and myself — the most interesting circumstance in this marriage, the one which perplexed us exceedingly, was the very possibility that it should ever have been brought to bear. For we could not conceive of Wordsworth as submitting his faculties to the humiliations and devotion of courtship. That self-surrender — that prostration of mind by which a man is too happy and proud to express the profundity of his service to the woman of his heart — it seemed a mere impossibility that ever Wordsworth should be brought to feel for a single instant; and what he did not sincerely feel, assuredly he was not the person to profess. Wordsworth, I take it upon myself to say, had not

the feelings within him which make this total devotion to a woman possible. There never lived a woman whom he would not have lectured and admonished under circumstances that should have seemed to require it; nor would he have conversed with her in any mood whatever without wearing an air of mild condescension to her understanding. To lie at her feet, to make her his idol, to worship her very caprices, and to adore the most unreasonable of her frowns—these things were impossible to Wordsworth; and being so, never could he, in any emphatic sense, have been a lover.

A lover, I repeat, in any passionate sense of the word, Wordsworth could not have been. And, moreover, it is remarkable that a woman who could dispense with that sort of homage in her suitor is not of a nature to inspire such a passion. That same meekness which reconciles her to the tone of superiority and freedom in the manner of her suitor, and which may afterwards in a wife become a sweet domestic grace, strips her of that too charming irritation, captivating at once and tormenting, which lurks in feminine pride. If there be an enchantress's spell yet surviving in this age of ours, it is the haughty grace of maidenly pride—the womanly sense of dignity, even when most in excess, and expressed in the language of scorn—which tortures a man and lacerates his heart, at the same time that it pierces him with admiration:—

*"Oh, what a world of scorn looks beautiful
In the contempt and anger of her lip!"*

And she who spares a man the agitations of this thralldom robs him no less of its divinest transports. Wordsworth, however, who never could have laid aside his own nature sufficiently to have played *his* part in such an impassioned courtship, by suiting himself to this high sexual pride with the humility of a lover, quite as little could have enjoyed the spectacle of such a pride, or have viewed it in any degree as an attraction: it would to him have been a pure vexation. Looking down even upon the lady of his heart, as upon the rest of the world, from the eminence of his own intellectual superiority—viewing her, in fact, as a child—he would be much more disposed to regard any airs of feminine disdain she might assume as the impertinence of girlish levity than as the caprice of womanly pride; and much I fear that, in any case of dispute, he would have called even his mistress, "Child! child!" and perhaps even (but this I do not say with the same certainty) might have bid her hold her tongue.

If, however, no lover, in a proper sense,—though, from many exquisite passages, one might conceive that at some time of his life he was, as especially from the inimitable stanzas beginning—

*"When she I loved was strong and gay,
And like a rose in June,"*

or perhaps (but less powerfully so, because here the passion, though profound, is less the *peculiar* passion of love) from the impassioned lamentation for "the pretty Barbara," beginning —

*" 'Tis said that some have died for love:
And here and there, amidst unhallow'd ground
In the cold north," etc. —*

yet, if no lover, or (which some of us have sometimes thought) a lover disappointed at some earlier period, by the death of her he loved, or by some other fatal event (for he always preserved a mysterious silence on the subject of that "Lucy," repeatedly alluded to or apostrophized in his poems); at all events he made what for him turned out a happy marriage. Few people have lived on such terms of entire harmony and affection as he lived with the woman of his final choice. Indeed, the sweetness, almost unexampled, of temper, which shed so sunny a radiance over Mrs. Wordsworth's manners, sustained by the happy life she led, the purity of her conscience, and the uniformity of her good health, made it impossible for anybody to have quarrelled with *her*; and whatever fits of ill-temper Wordsworth might have — for, with all his philosophy, he had such fits — met with no fuel to support them, except in the more irritable temperament of his sister. She was all fire, and an ardour which, like that of the first Lord Shaftesbury,

"O'er-informed its tenement of clay" ;

and, as this ardour looked out in every gleam of her wild eyes (those "wild eyes" so finely noticed in the "Tintern Abbey"), as it spoke in every word of her self-baffled utterance, as it gave a trembling movement to her very person and demeanour — easily enough it might happen that any apprehension of an unkind word should with her kindle a dispute. It might have happened: and yet, to the great honour of both, having such impassioned temperaments, rarely it did happen; and this was the more remarkable, as I have been assured that both were, in childhood, irritable or even ill-tempered, and they were constantly together; for Miss Wordsworth was always ready to walk out — wet or dry, storm or sunshine, night or day; whilst Mrs. Wordsworth was completely dedicated to her maternal duties, and rarely left the house, unless when the weather was tolerable, or, at least, only for short rambles. I should not have noticed this trait in Wordsworth's occasional manners, had it been gathered from domestic or confidential opportunities. But, on the contrary, the first two occasions on which, after months' domestic intercourse with Wordsworth, I became aware of his possible ill-humour and peevishness, were so public, that others, and those strangers, must have been equally made parties to the scene. This scene occurred in Kendal.

Having brought down the history of Wordsworth to the time of his marriage, I am reminded by that event to mention the singular good fortune, in all points of worldly prosperity, which has accompanied him through life. His marriage — the capital event of life — was fortunate, and inaugurated a long succession of other prosperities. He has himself described, in his "Leech-Gatherer," the fears that at one time, or at least in some occasional moments of his life, haunted him, lest at some period or other he might be reserved for poverty. "Cold, pain, and hunger, and all fleshly ills," occurred to his boding apprehension, and "mighty poets in their misery dead."

*"He thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul that perished in its pride;
Of him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough along the mountain-side."*

And, at starting on his career of life, certainly no man had plainer reasons for anticipating the worst evils that have ever persecuted poets, excepting only two reasons which might warrant him in hoping better; and these two were — his great prudence, and the temperance of his daily life. He could not be betrayed into foolish engagements; he could not be betrayed into expensive habits. Profusion and extravagance had no hold over him, by any one passion or taste. He was not luxurious in anything; was not vain or even careful of external appearances (not, at least, since he had left Cambridge, and visited a mighty nation in civil convulsions); was not even in the article of books expensive. Very few books sufficed him; he was careless habitually of all the current literature, or indeed of any literature that could not be considered as enshrining the very ideal, capital, and elementary grandeur of the human intellect. In this extreme limitation of his literary sensibilities he was as much assisted by that accident of his own intellectual condition — viz., extreme, intense, unparalleled *onesidedness* (*einseitigkeit*) — as by any peculiar sanity of feeling. Thousands of books that have given rapturous delight to millions of ingenuous minds for Wordsworth were absolutely a dead letter — closed and sealed up from his sensibilities and his powers of appreciation, not less than colours from a blind man's eye. Even the few books which his peculiar mind had made indispensable to him were not in such a sense indispensable as they would have been to a man of more sedentary habits. He lived in the open air, and the enormity of pleasure which both he and his sister drew from the common appearances of nature and their everlasting variety — variety so infinite that, if no one leaf of a tree or shrub ever exactly resembled another in all its filaments and their arrangement, still less did any one day ever repeat another in all its pleasurable elements. This pleasure was to him in the stead of many libraries: —

Having brought down the history of Wordsworth to the time of his marriage, I am reminded by that event to mention the singular good fortune, in all points of worldly prosperity, which has accompanied him through life. His marriage — the capital event of life — was fortunate, and inaugurated a long succession of other prosperities. He has himself described, in his "Leech-Gatherer," the fears that at one time, or at least in some occasional moments of his life, haunted him, lest at some period or other he might be reserved for poverty. "Cold, pain, and hunger, and all fleshly ills," occurred to his boding apprehension, and "mighty poets in their misery dead."

*"He thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul that perished in its pride;
Of him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough along the mountain-side."*

And, at starting on his career of life, certainly no man had plainer reasons for anticipating the worst evils that have ever persecuted poets, excepting only two reasons which might warrant him in hoping better; and these two were — his great prudence, and the temperance of his daily life. He could not be betrayed into foolish engagements; he could not be betrayed into expensive habits. Profusion and extravagance had no hold over him, by any one passion or taste. He was not luxurious in anything; was not vain or even careful of external appearances (not, at least, since he had left Cambridge, and visited a mighty nation in civil convulsions); was not even in the article of books expensive. Very few books sufficed him; he was careless habitually of all the current literature, or indeed of any literature that could not be considered as enshrining the very ideal, capital, and elementary grandeur of the human intellect. In this extreme limitation of his literary sensibilities he was as much assisted by that accident of his own intellectual condition — viz., extreme, intense, unparalleled *onesidedness* (*einseitigkeit*) — as by any peculiar sanity of feeling. Thousands of books that have given rapturous delight to millions of ingenuous minds for Wordsworth were absolutely a dead letter — closed and sealed up from his sensibilities and his powers of appreciation, not less than colours from a blind man's eye. Even the few books which his peculiar mind had made indispensable to him were not in such a sense indispensable as they would have been to a man of more sedentary habits. He lived in the open air, and the enormity of pleasure which both he and his sister drew from the common appearances of nature and their everlasting variety — variety so infinite that, if no one leaf of a tree or shrub ever exactly resembled another in all its filaments and their arrangement, still less did any one day ever repeat another in all its pleasurable elements. This pleasure was to him in the stead of many libraries: —

*"One impulse, from a vernal wood,
Could teach him more of Man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."*

And he, we may be sure, who could draw,

*"Even from the meanest flower that blows,
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears," —*

to whom the mere daisy, the pansy, the primrose, could furnish pleasures — not the puerile ones which his most puerile and worldly insulters imagined, but pleasures drawn from depths of reverie and meditative tenderness far beyond all power of *their* hearts to conceive: that man would hardly need any large variety of books. In fact, there were only two provinces of literature in which Wordsworth could be looked upon as decently well read — Poetry and Ancient History. Nor do I believe that he would much have lamented, on his own account, if all books had perished, excepting the entire body of English Poetry, and, perhaps, "Plutarch's Lives."

With these simple or rather austere tastes, Wordsworth (it might seem) had little reason to fear poverty, supposing him in possession of any moderate income; but meantime he had none. About the time when he left college, I have good grounds for believing that his whole regular income was precisely = 0. Some fragments must have survived from the funds devoted to his education; and with these, no doubt, he supported the expenses of his Continental tours, and his year's residence in France. But, at length, "cold, pain, and hunger, and all fleshly ills," must have stared him in the face pretty earnestly. And hope of longer evading an unpleasant destiny of daily toil, in some form or other, there seemed absolutely none. "For," as he himself expostulates with himself —

*"For how can he expect that others should
Sow for him, build for him, and, at his call,
Love him, who for himself will take no thought at all?"*

In this dilemma, he had all but resolved, as Miss Wordsworth once told me, to take pupils; and perhaps *that*, though odious enough, was the sole resource he had; for Wordsworth never acquired any popular talent of writing for the current press; and, at that period of his life, he was gloomily unfitted for bending to such a yoke. In this crisis of his fate it was that Wordsworth, for once, and once only, became a martyr to some nervous affection. *That* raised pity; but I could not forbear smiling at the remedy, or palliation, which his few friends adopted. Every night they played at cards with him, as the best mode of beguiling his sense of distress, whatever that might be: *cards*, which, in any part of the thirty-

and-one years since *I* have known Wordsworth, could have had as little power to interest him, or to cheat him of sorrow, as marbles or a top. However, so it was; for my information could not be questioned: it came from Miss Wordsworth.

The crisis, as I have said, had arrived for determining the future colour of his life. Memorable it is, that exactly in those critical moments when some decisive step had first become necessary, there happened the first instance of Wordsworth's good luck; and equally memorable that, at measured intervals throughout the long sequel of his life since then, a regular succession of similar but superior windfalls have fallen in, to sustain his expenditure, in exact concurrence with the growing claims upon his purse. A more fortunate man, I believe, does not exist than Wordsworth. The aid which now dropped from heaven, as it were, to enable him to range at will in paths of his own choosing, and

*"Finally array
His temples with the Muses' diadem,"*

came in the shape of a bequest from Raisley Calvert, a young man of good family in Cumberland, who died about this time of pulmonary consumption. A very remarkable young man he must have been, this Raisley Calvert, to have discerned, at this early period, that future superiority in Wordsworth which so few people suspected. He was the brother of a Cumberland gentleman, whom slightly I know; a generous man, doubtless; for he made no sort of objections (though legally, I have heard, he might) to his brother's farewell memorial of regard; a good man to all his dependents, as I have generally understood, in the neighborhood of Windy Brow, his mansion, near Keswick; and, as Southey always said (who must know better than I could do), a man of strong natural endowments; else, as his talk was of oxen, I might have made the mistake of supposing him to be, in heart and soul, what he was in profession — a mere farming country gentleman, whose ambition was chiefly directed to the turning up of mighty turnips. The sum left by Raisley Calvert was £900; and it was laid out in an annuity. This was the basis of Wordsworth's prosperity in life; and upon this he has built up, by a series of accessions, in which each step, taken separately for itself, seems perfectly natural, whilst the total result has undoubtedly something wonderful about it, the present goodly edifice of his fortunes. Next in the series came the present Lord Lonsdale's repayment of his predecessor's debt. Upon that, probably, it was that Wordsworth felt himself entitled to marry. Then, I believe, came some fortune with Miss Hutchinson; then — that is, fourthly — some worthy uncle of the same lady was pleased to betake himself to a better world, leaving to various nieces, and especially to Mrs. Wordsworth, something or other — I forget what, but it was expressed by thousands of pounds. At this moment, Wordsworth's family had begun to increase;

and the worthy old uncle, like everybody else in Wordsworth's case, finding his property very clearly "wanted," and, as people would tell him, "bespoke," felt how very indelicate it would look for him to stay any longer in this world; and so off he moved. But Wordsworth's family, and the wants of that family, still continued to increase; and the next person — viz., the fifth — who stood in the way, and must, therefore, have considered himself rapidly growing into a nuisance, was the stamp-distributor for the county of Westmoreland. About March 1814, I think it was, that his very comfortable situation was wanted. Probably it took a month for the news to reach him; because in April, and not before, feeling that he had received a proper notice to quit, he, good man (this stamp distributor), like all the rest, distributed himself and his office into two different places — the latter falling, of course, into the hands of Wordsworth.

This office, which it was Wordsworth's pleasure to speak of as "a little one," yielded, I believe, somewhere about £500 a year. Gradually, even *that*, with all former sources of income, became insufficient; which ought not to surprise anybody; for a son at Oxford, as a gentleman commoner, would spend, at the least, £300 per annum; and there were other children. Still, it is wrong to say that it *had* become insufficient; as usual, it had not come to that; but, on the first symptoms arising that it soon *would* come to that, somebody, of course, had notice to consider himself a sort of nuisance-elect; — in this case, it was the distributor of stamps for the county of Cumberland. His district was absurdly large; and what so reasonable as that he should submit to a Polish partition of his profits — no, not Polish; for, on reflection, such a partition neither was nor could be attempted with regard to an actual incumbent. But then, since people had such consideration for him as not to remodel the office so long as he lived, on the other hand, the least he could do for "people" in return — so as to show his sense of this consideration — was not to trespass on so much goodness longer than necessary. Accordingly, here, as in all cases before, the *Deus ex machinâ* who invariably interfered when any *nodus* arose in Wordsworth's affairs, such as could be considered *vindice dignus*, caused the distributor to begone into a region where no stamps are wanted, about the very month, or so, when an additional £400 per annum became desirable. This, or perhaps more, was understood to have been added, by the new arrangement, to the Westmoreland distributorship; the small towns of Keswick and Cockermouth, together with the important one of Whitehaven, being severed, under this remodelling, from their old dependency on Cumberland (to which geographically they belonged), and transferred to the small territory of rocky Westmoreland, the sum total of whose inhabitants was at that time not much above 50,000; of which number, one third, or nearly so, was collected into the only important town of Kendal; but, of the other two thirds, a larger proportion was a simple agricultural or pastoral population

than anywhere else in England. In Westmoreland, therefore, it may be supposed that the stamp demand could not have been so great, not perhaps by three quarters, as in Cumberland; which, besides having a population at least three times as large, had more and larger towns. The result of this new distribution was something that approached to an equalization of the districts — giving to each, as was said, in round terms, a thousand a year.

Thus I have traced Wordsworth's ascent through its several steps and stages, to what, for his moderate desires and habits so philosophic, may be fairly considered opulence. And it must rejoice every man who joins in the public homage *now* rendered to his powers (and what man is to be found that, more or less, does not?) to hear, with respect to one so lavishly endowed by nature, that he has not been neglected by fortune; that he has never had the finer edge of his sensibilities dulled by the sad anxieties, the degrading fears, the miserable dependencies of debt; that he has been blessed with competency even when poorest; has had hope and cheerful prospects in reversion through every stage of his life; that at all times he has been liberated from *reasonable* anxieties about the final interests of his children; that at all times he has been blessed with leisure, the very amplest that ever man enjoyed, for intellectual pursuits the most delightful; yes, that, even as regards those delicate and coy pursuits, he has possessed, in combination, all the conditions for their most perfect culture — the leisure, the ease, the solitude, the society, the domestic peace, the local scenery — Paradise for his eye, in Miltonic beauty, lying outside his windows, Paradise for his heart, in the perpetual happiness of his own fireside; and, finally, when increasing years might be supposed to demand something more of modern luxuries, and expanding intercourse with society something more of refined elegancies, that his means, still keeping pace in almost arithmetical ratio with his wants, had shed the graces of art upon the failing powers of nature, had stripped infirmity of discomfort, and (so far as the necessities of things will allow) had placed the final stages of life, by means of many compensations, by universal praise, by plaudits reverberated from senates, benedictions wherever his poems have penetrated, honour, troops of friends — in short, by all that miraculous prosperity can do to evade the primal decrees of nature, had placed the final stages upon a level with the first.

But now, reverting to the subject of Wordsworth's prosperity, I have numbered up six separate stages of good luck — six instances of pecuniary showers emptying themselves into his very bosom, at the very moments when they *began* to be needed, on the first symptoms that they might be wanted — accessions of fortune stationed upon his road like repeating frigates, connecting, to all appearance, some preconcerted line of operations, and, amidst the tumults of chance, wearing as much the air of purpose and design as if they supported a human plan. I have come down to the sixth

case. Whether there were any seventh, I do not know: but confident I feel that, had a seventh been required by circumstances, a seventh would have happened. So true it is that still, as Wordsworth needed a place or a fortune, the holder of that place or fortune was immediately served with a summons to surrender it: so certainly was this impressed upon my belief, as one of the blind necessities making up the prosperity and fixed destiny of Wordsworth, that, for myself, had I happened to know of any peculiar adaptation in an estate or office of mine to an existing need of Wordsworth's, forthwith, and with the speed of a man running for his life. I would have laid it down at his feet. "Take it," I should have said; "take it, or in three weeks I shall be a dead man."

Well, let me pause: I think the reader is likely by this time to have a slight notion of *my* notion of Wordsworth's inevitable prosperity, and the sort of *lien* that he had upon the incomes of other men who happened to stand in his way. The same prosperity attended the other branches of the family, with the single exception of John, the brother who perished in the *Abergavenny*: and even he was prosperous up to the moment of his fatal accident. As to Miss Wordsworth, who will, by some people, be classed amongst the non-prosperous, I rank her amongst the most fortunate of women; or, at least, if regard be had to that period of life which is most capable of happiness. Her fortune, after its repayment by Lord Lonsdale, was, much of it, confided, with a sisterly affection, to the use of her brother John; and part of it, I have heard, perished in his ship. How much, I never felt myself entitled to ask; but certainly a part was on that occasion understood to have been lost irretrievably. Either it was that only a partial insurance had been effected; or else the nature of the accident, being in home waters (off the coast of Dorsetshire), might, by the nature of the contract, have taken the case out of the benefit of the policy. This loss, however, had it even been total, for a single sister amongst a family of flourishing brothers, could not be of any lasting importance. A much larger number of voices would proclaim her to have been unfortunate in life because she made no marriage connexion; and certainly, the insipid as well as unfeeling ridicule which descends so plentifully upon those women who, perhaps from strength of character, have refused to make such a connexion where it promised little of elevated happiness, *does* make the state of singleness somewhat of a trial to the patience of many; and to many the vexation of this trial has proved a snare for beguiling them of their honourable resolutions. Meantime, as the opportunities are rare in which all the conditions concur for happy marriage connections, how important it is that the dignity of high-minded women should be upheld by society in the honourable election they make of a self-dependent virgin seclusion, by preference to a heartless marriage! Such women, as Mrs. Trollope justly remarks, fill a place in society which in their default would *not* be filled, and are available for duties requiring a tenderness and

a punctuality that could not be looked for from women preoccupied with household or maternal claims. If there were no regular fund (so to speak) of women free from conjugal and maternal duties, upon what body could we draw for our "sisters of mercy," etc.? In another point Mrs. Trollope is probably right: few women live unmarried from necessity. Miss Wordsworth had several offers; amongst them, to my knowledge, one from Hazlitt; all of them she rejected decisively. And she did right. A happier life, by far, was hers in youth, coming as near as difference of scenery and difference of religions would permit to that which was promised to Ruth — the Ruth of her brother's creation — by the youth who came from Georgia's shore; for, though not upon American savannah, or Canadian lakes —

*"With all their fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Amongst the evening clouds,"*

yet, amongst the loveliest scenes of sylvan England, and (at intervals) of sylvan Germany — amongst lakes, too, far better fitted to give the *sense* of their own character than the vast inland *seas* of America, and amongst mountains more romantic than many of the chief ranges in that country — her time fled away like some golden age, or like the life of primeval man; and she, like Ruth, was for years allowed

*"To run, though not a bride,
A sylvan huntress, by the side"*

of him to whom she, like Ruth, had dedicated her days, and to whose children, afterwards, she dedicated a love like that of mothers. Dear Miss Wordsworth! How noble a creature did she seem when I first knew her! — and when, on the very first night which I passed in her brother's company, he read to me, in illustration of something he was saying, a passage from Fairfax's "Tassa," ending pretty nearly with these words —

*"Amidst the broad fields and the endless wood,
The lofty lady kept her maidenhood,"*

I thought that, possibly, he had his sister in his thoughts. Yet "lofty" was hardly the right word. Miss Wordsworth was too ardent and fiery a creature to maintain the reserve essential to dignity; and dignity was the last thing one thought of in the presence of one so natural, so fervent in her feelings, and so embarrassed in their utterance — sometimes, also, in the attempt to check them. It must not, however, be supposed that there was any silliness or weakness of enthusiasm about her. She was under the continual restraint of severe good sense, though liberated from that false shame which, in so many persons, accompanies all expressions of natural

emotion; and she had too long enjoyed the ennobling conversation of her brother, and his admirable comments on the poets, which they read in common, to fail in any essential point of logic or propriety of thought. Accordingly, her letters, though the most careless and unelaborate — nay, the most hurried that can be imagined — are models of good sense and just feeling. In short, beyond any person I have known in this world, Miss Wordsworth was the creature of impulse; but, as a woman most thoroughly virtuous and well-principled, as one who could not fail to be kept by her own excellent heart, and as an intellectual creature from her cradle, with much of her illustrious brother's peculiarity of mind — finally, as one who had been, in effect, educated and trained by that very brother — she won the sympathy and the respectful regard of every man worthy to approach her. Properly, and in a spirit of prophecy, was she named *Dorothy*; in its Greek meaning, *gift of God*, well did this name prefigure the relation in which she stood to Wordsworth, the mission with which she was charged — to wait upon him as the tenderest and most faithful of domestics; to love him as a sister; to sympathize with him as a confidante; to counsel him; to cheer him and sustain him by the natural expression of her feelings — so quick, so ardent, so unaffected — upon the probable effect of whatever thoughts or images he might conceive; finally, and above all other ministrations, to ingraft, by her sexual sense of beauty, upon his masculine austerity that delicacy and those graces which else (according to the grateful acknowledgments of his own maturest retrospect) it never could have had —

*"The blessing of my later years
Was with me when I was a boy:
She gave me hopes, she gave me fears,
A heart the fountain of sweet tears,*

And love, and thought, and joy."

And elsewhere he described her, in a philosophic poem, still in MS., as one who planted flowers and blossoms with her feminine hand upon what might else have been an arid rock — massy, indeed, and grand, but repulsive from the severity of its features. I may sum up in one brief abstract the amount of Miss Wordsworth's character, as a companion, by saying, that she was the very wildest (in the sense of the most natural) person I have ever known; and also the truest, most inevitable, and at the same time the quickest and readiest in her sympathy with either joy or sorrow, with laughter or with tears, with the realities of life or the larger realities of the poets!

Meantime, amidst all this fascinating furniture of her mind, won from nature, from solitude, from enlightened companionship, Miss Wordsworth

was as thoroughly deficient (some would say painfully deficient—I say charmingly deficient) in ordinary female accomplishments as “Cousin Mary” in dear Miss Mitford’s delightful sketch. Of French, she might have barely enough to read a plain modern page of narrative; Italian, I question whether any; German, just enough to insult the German literati, by showing how little she had found them or their writings necessary to her heart. The “Luise” of Voss, the “Hermann und Dorothea” of Goethe she had begun to translate, as young ladies do “Télémaque”; but, like them, had chiefly cultivated the first two pages; with the third she had a slender acquaintance, and with the fourth she meditated an intimacy at some future day. Music, in her solitary and out-of-doors life, she could have little reason for cultivating; or is it possible that any woman can draw the enormous energy requisite for this attainment, upon a *modern* scale of perfection, out of any other principle than that of vanity (at least of great value for social applause) or else of deep musical sensibility; neither of which belonged to Miss Wordsworth’s constitution of mind. But, as everybody agrees in our days to think this accomplishment of no value whatever, and, in fact, *unproducible*, unless existing in an exquisite state of culture, no complaint could be made on that score, nor any surprise felt. But the case in which the irregularity of Miss Wordsworth’s education *did* astonish one was in that part which respected her literary knowledge. In whatever she read, or neglected to read, she had obeyed the single impulse of her own heart; where that led her, *there* she followed: where that was mute or indifferent, not a thought had she to bestow upon a writer’s high reputation, or the call for some acquaintance with his works to meet the demands of society. And thus the strange anomaly arose, of a woman deeply acquainted with some great authors, whose works lie pretty much out of the fashionable beat; able, moreover, in her own person, to produce brilliant effects; able on some subjects to write delightfully, and with the impress of originality upon all she uttered; and yet ignorant of great classical works in her own mother tongue, and careless of literary history in a degree which at once exiled her from the rank and privileges of *bluestockingism*.

The reader may, perhaps, have objected silently to the illustration drawn from Miss Mitford, that “Cousin Mary” does not effect her fascinations out of pure negations. Such negations, from the mere startling effect of their oddity in this present age, might fall in with the general current of her attractions; but Cousin Mary’s undoubtedly lay in the *positive* witcheries of a manner and a character transcending, by force of irresistible nature (as in a similar case recorded by Wordsworth in “The Excursion”) all the pomp of nature and art united as seen in ordinary creatures. Now, in Miss Wordsworth, there were certainly no “Cousin Mary” fascinations of manner and deportment, that snatch a grace beyond the reach of art: *there* she was, indeed, painfully deficient;

for hurry mars and defeats even the most ordinary expression of the feminine character — viz., its gentleness: abruptness and trepidation leave often a joint impression of what seems for an instant both rudeness and ungracefulness: and the least painful impression was that of unsexual awkwardness. But the point in which Miss Wordsworth made the most ample amends for all that she wanted of more customary accomplishments, was this very originality and native freshness of intellect, which settled with so bewitching an effect upon some of her writings, and upon many a sudden remark or ejaculation, extorted by something or other that struck her eye, in the clouds, or in colouring, or in accidents of light and shade, of form or combination of form. To talk of her “writings” is too pompous an expression, or at least far beyond any pretensions that she ever made for herself. Of poetry she has written little indeed; and that little not, in my opinion, of much merit. The verses published by her brother, and beginning, “Which way does the wind come?”, meant only as nursery lines, are certainly wild and pretty; but the other specimen is likely to strike most readers as feeble and trivial in the sentiment. Meantime, the book which is in very deed a monument to her power of catching and expressing all the hidden beauties of natural scenery, with a felicity of diction, a truth and strength, that far transcend Gilpin, or professional writers on those subjects, is her record of a *first* tour in Scotland, made about the year 1802. This MS. book (unless my recollection of it, from a period now gone by for thirty years, has deceived me greatly) is absolutely unique in its class; and, though it never could be very popular, from the minuteness of its details, intelligible only to the eye, and the luxuriation of its descriptions, yet I believe no person has ever been favoured with a sight of it that has not yearned for its publication. Its own extraordinary merit, apart from the interest which *now* invests the name of Wordsworth, could not fail to procure purchasers for one edition on its first appearance.

Coleridge was of the party at first; but afterwards, under some attack of rheumatism, found or thought it necessary to leave them. Melancholy it would be at this time, thirty-six years and more from the era of that tour, to read it under the afflicting remembrances of all which has been suffered in the interval by two at least out of the three who composed the travelling party; for I fear that Miss Wordsworth has suffered not much less than Coleridge, and, in any general expression of it, from the same cause, viz. an excess of pleasurable excitement and luxurious sensibility, sustained in youth by a constitutional glow from animal causes, but drooping as soon as that was withdrawn. It is painful to point a moral from any story connected with those whom one loves or has loved; painful to look for one moment towards any “improvement” of such a case, especially where there is no reason to tax the parties with any criminal contribution to their own sufferings, except through that relaxation of the will and

its potential energies through which most of us, at some time or other — I myself too deeply and sorrowfully — stand accountable to our own consciences. Not, therefore, with any intention of speaking in a monitorial or censorial character, do I here notice a defect in Miss Wordsworth's self-education of something that might have mitigated the sort of suffering which, more or less, ever since the period of her too genial, too radiant youth, I suppose her to have struggled with. I have mentioned the narrow basis on which her literary interests had been made to rest — the exclusive character of her reading, and the utter want of pretension, and of all that looks like *bluestockingism*, in the style of her habitual conversation and mode of dealing with literature. Now, to me it appears, upon reflexion, that it would have been far better had Miss Wordsworth condescended a little to the ordinary mode of pursuing literature; better for her own happiness if she *had* been a bluestocking; or, at least, if she had been, in good earnest, a writer for the press, with the pleasant cares and solitudes of one who has some little ventures, as it were, on that vast ocean.

We all know with how womanly and serene a temper literature has been pursued by Joanna Baillie, by Miss Mitford, and other women of admirable genius — with how absolutely no sacrifice or loss of feminine dignity they have cultivated the profession of authorship; and, if we could hear their report, I have no doubt that the little cares of correcting proofs, and the forward-looking solitudes connected with the mere business arrangements of new publications, would be numbered amongst the minor pleasures of life; whilst the more elevated cares connected with the intellectual business of such projects must inevitably have done much to solace the troubles which, as human beings, they cannot but have experienced, and even to scatter flowers upon their path. Mrs. Johnstone of Edinburgh has pursued the profession of literature — the noblest of professions, and the only one open to both sexes alike — with even more assiduity, and as a *daily* occupation; and, I have every reason to believe, with as much benefit to her own happiness as to the instruction and amusement of her readers; for the petty cares of authorship are agreeable, and its serious cares are ennobling. More especially is such an occupation useful to a woman without children, and without any *prospective* resources — resources in objects that involve hopes growing and unfulfilled. It is too much to expect of any woman (or man either) that her mind should support itself in a pleasurable activity, under the drooping energies of life, by resting on the past or on the present; some interest in reversion, some subject of hope from day to day, must be called in to reinforce the animal fountains of good spirits. Had that been opened for Miss Wordsworth, I am satisfied that she would have passed a more cheerful middle-age, and would not, at any period, have yielded to that nervous depression (or is it, perhaps, nervous irritation?) which, I grieve to hear, has clouded her latter days. Nephews and nieces, whilst young and innocent, are as

good almost as sons and daughters to a fervid and loving heart that has carried them in her arms from the hour they were born. But, after a nephew has grown into a huge hulk of a man, six feet high, and as stout as a bullock; after he has come to have children of his own, lives at a distance, and finds occasion to talk much of oxen and turnips — no offence to him! — he ceases to be an object of any profound sentiment. There is nothing in such a subject to rouse the flagging pulses of the heart, and to sustain a fervid spirit, to whom, at the very best, human life offers little of an adequate or sufficing interest, unless when idealized by the magic of the mighty poets. Farewell, Miss Wordsworth! farewell, impassioned Dorothy! I have not seen you for many a day — shall, too probably, never see you again; but shall attend your steps with tender interest so long as I hear of you living: so will Professor Wilson; and, from two hearts at least, that knew and admired you in your fervid prime, it may sometimes cheer the gloom of your depression to be assured of never-failing remembrance, full of love and respectful pity.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792-1822

By THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK¹ (1785-1866)



“Rousseau, ne recevant aucun auteur, remercie Madame — de ses bontés, et la prie de ne plus venir chez lui.”

ROUSSEAU had a great aversion to visitors of all classes, but especially to literary visitors, feeling sure that they would print something about him. A lady who had long persisted in calling on him, one day published a *brochure*, and sent him a copy. He rejoiced in the opportunity which brought her under his rule of exclusion, and terminated their intercourse by the above *billet-doux*.

Rousseau's rule bids fair to become general with all who wish to keep in the *secretum iter et fallentis semita vitæ*, and not to become materials for general gossip. For not only is a departed author of any note considered a fair subject to be dissected at the tea-table of the reading public, but all his friends and connexions, however quiet and retiring and unobtrusive may have been the general tenor of their lives, must be served up with him. It is the old village scandal on a larger scale; and as in these days of universal locomotion people know nothing of their neighbours, they prefer tittle-tattle about notorieties to the retailing of whispsers about the Jenkinsons and Tomkinsons of the vicinity.

This appetite for gossip about notorieties being once created in the “reading public,” there will be always found persons to minister to it; and among the volunteers of this service, those who are best informed and who most valued the departed will probably not be the foremost. Then come biographies abounding with errors; and then, as matter of defence perhaps, comes on the part of friends a tardy and more authentic narrative. This is at best, as Mr. Hogg describes it, a “difficult and delicate task.” But it is always a matter of choice and discretion. No man is bound to write the life of another. No man who does so is bound to tell the public all he knows. On the contrary, he is bound to keep to himself whatever may injure the interests or hurt the feelings of the living, especially when

¹ *The Memoirs of Percy Bysshe Shelley* first published in *Fraser's Magazine*, London, 1858 and 1860.

A Supplementary Notice which was later added is not here reprinted. Footnotes have been omitted.

the latter have in no way injured or calumniated the dead, and are not necessarily brought before the tribunal of public opinion in the character of either plaintiffs or defendants. Neither if there be in the life of the subject of the biography any event which he himself would willingly have blotted from the tablet of his own memory, can it possibly be the duty of a survivor to drag it into daylight. If such an event be the cardinal point of a life; if to conceal it or to misrepresent it would be to render the whole narrative incomplete, incoherent, unsatisfactory alike to the honour of the dead and the feelings of the living; then, as there is no moral compulsion to speak of the matter at all, it is better to let the whole story slumber in silence.

Having lived some years in very familiar intimacy with the subject of these memoirs; having had as good opportunities as any, and better than most persons now living, to observe and appreciate his great genius, extensive acquirements, cordial friendships, disinterested devotion to the well-being of the few with whom he lived in domestic intercourse, and ardent endeavours by private charity and public advocacy to ameliorate the condition of the many who pass their days in unremunerating toil; having been named his executor conjointly with Lord Byron, whose death, occurring before that of Shelley's father, when the son's will came into effect, left me alone in that capacity; having lived after his death in the same cordial intimacy with his widow, her family, and one or two at least of his surviving friends, I have been considered to have some peculiar advantages for writing his life, and have often been requested to do so; but for the reasons above given I have always refused.

Wordsworth says to the Cuckoo: —

*O blithe new-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee, and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?*

*Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery.*

Shelley was fond of repeating these verses, and perhaps they were not forgotten in his poem "To a Skylark": —

*Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart,
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.*

*The pale purple even
 Melts around thy flight:
 Like a star of heaven,
 In the broad daylight,
 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.*

Now, I could have wished that, like Wordsworth's Cuckoo, he had been allowed to remain a voice and a mystery: that, like his own Skylark, he had been left unseen in his congenial region,

*Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
 Which men call earth,*

and that he had been only heard in the splendour of his song. But since it is not to be so, since so much has been, and so much more will probably be, written about him, the motives which deterred me from originating a substantive work on the subject, do not restrict me from commenting on what has been published by others, and from correcting errors, if such should appear to me to occur, in the narratives which I may pass under review.

I have placed the works at the head of this article in the order in which they were published. I have no acquaintance with Mr. Middleton. Mr. Trelawny and Mr. Hogg I may call my friends.

Mr. Middleton's work is chiefly a compilation from previous publications, with some very little original matter, curiously obtained.

Mr. Trelawny's work relates only to the later days of Mr. Shelley's life in Italy.

Mr. Hogg's work is the result of his own personal knowledge, and of some inedited letters and other documents, either addressed to himself or placed at his disposal by Sir Percy Shelley and his lady. It is to consist of four volumes, of which the two just published bring down the narrative to the period immediately preceding Shelley's separation from his first wife. At that point I shall terminate this first part of my proposed review.

I shall not anticipate opinions, but shall go over all that is important in the story as briefly as I can, interspersing such observations as may suggest themselves in its progress.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born at his father's seat, Field Place, in Sussex, on the 4th of August 1792. His grandfather, Sir Bysshe Shelley, was then living, and his father, Timothy Shelley, Esquire, was then or subsequently a Member of Parliament. The family was of great antiquity; but Percy conferred more honour on it than he derived from it.

He had four sisters and a brother, the youngest of the family, and the days of his childhood appear to have passed affectionately in this domestic society.

To the first ten years of his life we have no direct testimony but that

of his sister Hellen, in a series of letters to Lady Shelley, published in the beginning of Mr. Hogg's work. In the first of these she says: —

“A child who at six years old was sent daily to learn Latin at a clergyman's house, and as soon as it was expedient removed to Dr. Greenland's, from thence to Eton, and subsequently to college, could scarcely have been the *uneducated* son that some writers would endeavour to persuade those who read their books to believe he ought to have been, if his parents despised education.”

Miss Hellen gives an illustration of Shelley's boyish traits of imagination: —

“On one occasion he gave the most minute details of a visit he had paid to some ladies with whom he was acquainted at our village. He described their reception of him, their occupations, and the wandering in their pretty garden, where there was a well-remembered filbert-walk and an undulating turf-bank, the delight of our morning visit. There must have been something peculiar in this little event; for I have often heard it mentioned as a singular fact, and it was ascertained almost immediately, that the boy had never been to the house. It was not considered as a falsehood to be punished; but I imagine his conduct altogether must have been so little understood and unlike that of the generality of children, that these tales were left unnoticed.”

Mr. Hogg says at a later date: —

“He was altogether incapable of rendering an account of any transaction whatsoever, according to the strict and precise truth, and the bare naked realities of actual life; not through an addiction to falsehood, which he cordially detested, but because he was the creature, the unsuspecting and unresisting victim, of his irresistible imagination.

“Had he written to ten different individuals the history of some proceeding in which he was himself a party and an eyewitness, each of his ten reports would have varied from the rest in essential and important circumstances. The relation given on the morrow would be unlike that of the day, as the latter would contradict the tale of yesterday.”

Several instances will be given of the habit, thus early developed in Shelley, of narrating, as real, events which had never occurred; and his friends and relations have thought it necessary to give prominence to this habit as a characteristic of his strong imaginativeness predominating over reality. Coleridge has written much and learnedly on this subject of ideas with the force of sensations, of which he found many examples in himself.

At the age of ten, Shelley was sent to Sion House Academy, near Brentford. “Our master,” says his schoolfellow, Captain Medwin, “a Scotch

Doctor of Law, and a divine, was a choleric man, of a sanguinary complexion, in a green old age, not wanting in good qualities, but very capricious in his temper, which, good or bad, was influenced by the daily occurrences of a domestic life not the most harmonious, and of which his face was the barometer and his hand the index." This worthy was in the habit of cracking unbecoming jokes, at which most of the boys laughed; but Shelley, who could not endure this sort of pleasantry, received them with signs of aversion. A day or two after one of these exhibitions, when Shelley's manifestation of dislike to the matter had attracted the preceptor's notice, Shelley had a theme set him for two Latin lines on the subject of *Tempestas*.

"He came to me," says Medwin, "to assist him in the task. I had a cribbing book, of which I made great use, Ovid's *Tristibus*. I knew that the only work of Ovid with which the Doctor was acquainted was the *Metamorphoses*, and by what I thought good luck, I happened to stumble on two lines exactly applicable to the purpose. The hexameter I forget, but the pentameter ran thus:—

Jam, jam tacturos sidera celsa putes."

So far the story is not very classically told. The title of the book should have been given as *Tristia*, or *De Tristibus*; and the reading is *tacturas*, not *tacturos*; *summa*, not *celsa*: the latter term is inapplicable to the stars. The distich is this:

Me miserum! quanti montes volvuntur aquarum!
Jam, jam tacturas sidera summa putes.

Something was probably substituted for *Me miserum!* But be this as it may, Shelley was grievously beaten for what the schoolmaster thought bad Latin. The Doctor's judgment was of a piece with that of the Edinburgh Reviewers, when taking a line of Pindar, which Payne Knight had borrowed in a Greek translation of a passage in Gray's Bard, to have been Payne Knight's own, they pronounced it to be nonsense.

The name of the Brentford Doctor according to Miss Hellen Shelley was Greenland, and according to Mr. Hogg it was Greenlaw. Captain Medwin does not mention the name, but says, "So much did we mutually hate Sion House, that we never alluded to it in after-life." Mr. Hogg says, "In walking with Shelley to Bishopsgate from London, he pointed out to me more than once a gloomy brick house as being this school. He spoke of the master, Doctor Greenlaw, not without respect, saying, 'he was a hard-headed Scotchman, and a man of rather liberal opinions.'" Of this period of his life he never gave me an account, nor have I heard or read any details which appeared to bear the impress of truth. Between these two accounts the Doctor and his character seem reduced to a myth. I myself know nothing of the matter. I do not remember Shelley ever men-

tioning the Doctor to me. But we shall find as we proceed, that whenever there are two evidences to one transaction, many of the recorded events of Shelley's life will resolve themselves into the same mythical character.

At the best, Sion House Academy must have been a bad beginning of scholastic education for a sensitive and imaginative boy.

After leaving this academy, he was sent, in his fifteenth year, to Eton. The head-master was Doctor Keate, a less mythical personage than the Brentford Orbilius, but a variety of the same genus. Mr. Hogg says: —

“Dr. Keate was a short, short-necked, short-legged, man — thick-set, powerful, and very active. His countenance resembled that of a bulldog; the expression was not less sweet and bewitching: his eyes, his nose, and especially his mouth, were exactly like that comely and engaging animal, and so were his short crooked legs. It was said in the school that old Keate could pin and hold a bull with his teeth. His iron sway was the more unpleasant and shocking after the long mild Saturnian reign of Dr. Goodall, whose temper, character, and conduct corresponded precisely with his name, and under whom Keate had been master of the lower school. Discipline, wholesome and necessary in moderation, was carried by him to an excess. It is reported that on one morning he flogged eighty boys. Although he was rigid, coarse, and despotical, some affirm that on the whole he was not unjust, nor altogether devoid of kindness. His behaviour was accounted vulgar and ungentlemanlike, and therefore he was particularly odious to the gentlemen of the school, especially to the refined and aristocratical Shelley.”

But Shelley suffered even more from his schoolfellows than he did from his master. It had been so at Brentford, and it was still more so at Eton, from the more organized system of fagging, to which no ill-usage would induce him to submit. But among his equals in age he had several attached friends, and one of these, in a letter dated February 27th, 1857, gives the following reminiscences of their Eton days: — (Hogg i. 43.)

“MY DEAR MADAM, — Your letter has taken me back to the sunny time of boyhood, ‘when thought is speech and speech is truth,’ when I was the friend and companion of Shelley at Eton. What brought us together in that small world was, I suppose, kindred feelings, and the predominance of fancy and imagination. Many a long and happy walk have I had with him in the beautiful neighbourhood of dear old Eton. We used to wander for hours about Clewer, Frogmore, the park at Windsor, the Terrace; and I was a delighted and willing listener to his marvellous stories of fairyland, and apparitions, and spirits, and haunted ground; and his speculations were then (for his mind was far more developed than mine) of the world beyond the grave. Another of his favourite rambles was

Stoke Park, and the picturesque churchyard where Gray is said to have written his 'Elegy,' of which he was very fond. I was myself far too young to form any estimate of character, but I loved Shelley for his kindness and affectionate ways. He was not made to endure the rough and boisterous pastime at Eton, and his shy and gentle nature was glad to escape far away, to muse over strange fancies, for his mind was reflective and teeming with deep thought. His lessons were child's play to him, and his power of Latin versification marvellous. I think I remember some long work he had even then commenced, but I never saw it. His love of nature was intense, and the sparkling poetry of his mind shone out of his speaking eye when he was dwelling on anything good or great. He certainly was not happy at Eton, for his was a disposition that needed especial personal superintendence to watch and cherish and direct all his noble aspirations and the remarkable tenderness of his heart. He had great moral courage, and feared nothing but what was base, and false, and low. He never joined in the usual sports of the boys, and what is remarkable, never went out in a boat on the river. What I have here set down will be of little use to you, but will please you as a sincere and truthful and humble tribute to one whose good name was sadly whispered away. Shelley said to me when leaving Oxford under a cloud, 'Halliday, I am come to say good-bye to you, if you are not afraid to be seen with me!' I saw him once again in the autumn of 1814, when he was glad to introduce me to his wife. I think he said he was just come from Ireland. You have done quite right in applying to me direct, and I am only sorry that I have no anecdotes or letters of that period to furnish.

I am, yours truly,

WALTER S. HALLIDAY."

This is the only direct testimony to Shelley's Eton life from one who knew him there. It contains two instances of how little value can be attached to any other than such direct testimony. That at that time he never went out in a boat on the river I believe to be strictly true: nevertheless Captain Medwin says: — "He told me the greatest delight he experienced at Eton was from boating. . . . He never lost the fondness with which he regarded the Thames, no new acquaintance when he went to Eton, for at Brentford we had more than once played the truant, and rowed to Kew, and once to Richmond." But these truant excursions were exceptional. His affection for boating began at a much later period, as I shall have occasion to notice. The second instance is: — "I think he said he was just come from Ireland." In the autumn of 1814 it was not from Ireland, but from the Continent that he had just returned.

Captain Medwin's *Life of Shelley* abounds with inaccuracies; not intentional misrepresentations, but misapprehensions and errors of memory. Several of these occur in reference to Shelley's boyish passion for his

cousin Harriet Grove. This, like Lord Byron's early love for Miss Chaworth, came to nothing. But most boys of any feeling and imagination have some such passion, and, as in these instances, it usually comes to nothing. Much more has been made of both these affairs than they are worth. It is probable that few of Johnson's poets passed through their boyhood without a similar attachment, but if it came at all under the notice of our literary Hercules, he did not think it worth recording. I shall notice this love-affair in its proper place, but chiefly for the sake of separating from it one or two matters which have been erroneously assigned to it.

Shelley often spoke to me of Eton, and of the persecutions he had endured from the elder boys, with feelings of abhorrence which I never heard him express in an equal degree in relation to any other subject, except when he spoke of Lord Chancellor Eldon. He told me that he had been provoked into striking a penknife through the hand of one of his young tyrants, and pinning it to the desk, and that this was the cause of his leaving Eton prematurely: but his imagination often presented past events to him as they might have been, not as they were. Such a circumstance must have been remembered by others if it had actually occurred. But if the occurrence was imaginary, it was in a memory of cordial detestation that the imagination arose.

Mr. Hogg vindicates the system of fagging, and thinks he was himself the better for the discipline in after life. But Mr. Hogg is a man of imperturbable temper and adamant patience: and with all this he may have fallen into good hands, for all big boys are not ruffians. But Shelley was a subject totally unfit for the practice in its best form, and he seems to have experienced it in its worst.

At Eton he became intimate with Doctor Lind, "a name well known among the professors of medical science," says Mrs. Shelley, who proceeds: —

" 'This man,' Shelley has often said, 'is exactly what an old man ought to be. Free, calm-spirited, full of benevolence, and even of youthful ardour; his eye seemed to burn with supernatural spirit beneath his brow, shaded by his venerable white locks; he was tall, vigorous, and healthy in his body, tempered, as it had ever been, by his amiable mind. I owe to that man far, ah! far more than I owe to my father; he loved me, and I shall never forget our long talks, when he breathed the spirit of the kindest tolerance and the purest wisdom. Once, when I was very ill during the holidays, as I was recovering from a fever which had attacked my brain, a servant overheard my father consult about sending me to a private madhouse. I was a favourite among all our servants, so this fellow came and told me, as I lay sick in bed. My horror was beyond words, and I might soon have been mad indeed if they had proceeded in their iniquitous plan. I had one hope. I was master of three pounds in money, and with the servant's help

I contrived to send an express to Dr. Lind. He came, and I shall never forget his manner on that occasion. His profession gave him authority; his love for me ardour. He dared my father to execute his purpose, and his menaces had the desired effect.' ”

Mr. Hogg subjoins: —

“ I have heard Shelley speak of his fever, and this scene at Field Place, more than once, in nearly the same terms as Mrs. Shelley adopts. It appeared to myself, and to others also, that his recollections were those of a person not quite recovered from a fever, and still disturbed by the horrors of the disease.”

However this may have been, the idea that his father was continually on the watch for a pretext to lock him up, haunted him through life, and a mysterious intimation of his father's intention to effect such a purpose was frequently received by him, and communicated to his friends as a demonstration of the necessity under which he was placed of changing his residence and going abroad.

I pass over his boyish schemes for raising the devil, of which much is said in Mr. Hogg's book. He often spoke of them to me; but the principal fact of which I have any recollection was one which he treated only as a subject of laughter — the upsetting into the fire in his chamber at Eton of a frying-pan full of diabolical ingredients, and the rousing up all the inmates in his dame's house in the dead of the night by the abominable effluvia. If he had ever had any faith in the possible success of his incantations, he had lost it before I knew him.

We now come to the first really important event of his life — his expulsion from Oxford.

At University College, Oxford, in October, 1810, Mr. Hogg first became acquainted with him. In their first conversation Shelley was exalting the physical sciences, especially chemistry. Mr. Hogg says: —

“ As I felt but little interest in the subject of his conversation, I had leisure to examine, and I may add to admire, the appearance of my very extraordinary guest. It was a sum of many contradictions. His figure was slight and fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. He was tall, but he stooped so much that he seemed of a low stature. His clothes were expensive, and made according to the most approved mode of the day; but they were tumbled, rumpled, unbrushed. His gestures were abrupt and sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. His complexion was delicate and almost feminine, of the purest white and red; yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun. . . . His features, his whole face, and particularly his head, were in fact unusually small; yet the last *appeared* of a remark-

able bulk, for his hair was long and bushy . . . he often rubbed it up fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers through his locks unconsciously, so that it was singularly wild and rough. . . . His features were not symmetrical (the mouth perhaps excepted); yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I never met with in any other countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual. . . . I admired the enthusiasm of my new acquaintance, his ardour in the cause of science, and his thirst for knowledge. But there was one physical blemish that threatened to neutralize all his excellence."

This blemish was his voice.

There is a good deal in these volumes about Shelley's discordant voice. This defect he certainly had; but it was chiefly observable when he spoke under excitement. Then his voice was not only dissonant, like a jarring string, but he spoke in sharp fourths, the most displeasing sequence of sound that can fall on the human ear: but it was scarcely so when he spoke calmly, and not at all so when he read; on the contrary, he seemed then to have his voice under perfect command: it was good both in tune and in tone; it was low and soft, but clear, distinct, and expressive. I have heard him read almost all Shakspeare's tragedies, and some of his more poetical comedies, and it was a pleasure to hear him read them.

Mr. Hogg's description of Shelley's personal appearance gives a better idea of him than the portrait prefixed to his work, which is similar to that prefixed to the work of Mr. Trelawny, except that Mr. Trelawny's is lithographed and Mr. Hogg's is engraved. These portraits do not impress themselves on me as likenesses. They seem to me to want the true outline of Shelley's features, and above all, to want their true expression. There is a portrait in the Florentine Gallery which represents him to me much more truthfully. It is that of Antonio Leisman, No. 155 of the *Ritratti de' Pittori*, in the Paris republication.

The two friends had made together a careful analysis of the doctrines of Hume. The papers were in Shelley's custody, and from a small part of them he made a little book, which he had printed, and which he sent by post to such persons as he thought would be willing to enter into a metaphysical discussion. He sent it under an assumed name, with a note, requesting that if the recipient were willing to answer the tract, the answer should be sent to a specified address in London. He received many answers; but in due time the little work and its supposed authors were denounced to the college authorities.

"It was a fine spring morning, on Lady-day, in the year 1811," says Mr. Hogg, "when I went to Shelley's rooms. He was absent; but before I had collected our books he rushed in. He was terribly agitated. I anxiously inquired what had happened.

“ ‘I am expelled,’ he said, as soon as he had recovered himself a little. ‘I am expelled! I was sent for suddenly a few minutes ago; I went to the common room, where I found our master, and two or three of the fellows. The master produced a copy of the little syllabus, and asked me if I were the author of it. He spoke in a rude, abrupt, and insolent tone. I begged to be informed for what purpose he put the question. No answer was given; but the master loudly and angrily repeated, “Are you the author of this book?” “If I can judge from your manner,” I said, “you are resolved to punish me if I should acknowledge that it is my work. If you can prove that it is, produce your evidence; it is neither just nor lawful to interrogate me in such a case and for such a purpose. Such proceedings would become a court of inquisitors, but not free men in a free country.” “Do you choose to deny that this is your composition?” the master reiterated in the same rude and angry voice.’

“Shelley complained much of his violent and ungentlemanlike deportment, saying, ‘I have experienced tyranny and injustice before, and I well know what vulgar violence is, but I never met with such unworthy treatment. I told him calmly but firmly that I was determined not to answer any questions respecting the publication on the table.

“ ‘He immediately repeated his demand; I persisted in my refusal. And he said furiously, “Then you are expelled; and I desire you will quit the college early to-morrow morning at the latest.”

“ ‘One of the fellows took up two papers, and handed one of them to me; here it is.’ He produced a regular sentence of expulsion, drawn up in due form, under the seal of the college. Shelley was full of spirit and courage, frank and fearless; but he was likewise shy, unpresuming, and eminently sensitive. I have been with him in many trying situations of his after-life, but I never saw him so deeply shocked and so cruelly agitated as on this occasion.

“ ‘A nice sense of honour shrinks from the most distant touch of disgrace—even from the insults of those men whose contumely can bring no shame. He sat on the sofa, repeating with convulsive vehemence the words, ‘Expelled, expelled!’ his head shaking with emotion, and his whole frame quivering.”

A similar scene followed with Mr. Hogg himself, which he very graphically describes. The same questions, the same refusal to answer them, the same sentence of expulsion, and a peremptory order to quit the college early on the morrow. And accordingly, early on the next morning, Shelley and his friend took their departure from Oxford.

I accept Mr. Hogg’s account of this transaction as substantially correct. In Shelley’s account of it to me there were material differences; and making all allowance for the degree in which, as already noticed, his imagination coloured the past, there is one matter of fact which remains inexpli-

cable. According to him, his expulsion was a matter of great form and solemnity; there was a sort of public assembly, before which he pleaded his own cause, in a long oration, in the course of which he called on the illustrious spirits who had shed glory on those walls to look down on their degenerate successors. Now, the inexplicable matter to which I have alluded is this: he showed me an Oxford newspaper, containing a full report of the proceedings, with his own oration at great length. I suppose the pages of that diurnal were not deathless, and that it would now be vain to search for it; but that he had it, and showed it to me, is absolutely certain. His oration may have been, as some of Cicero's published orations were, a speech in the potential mood; one which might, could, should, or would have been spoken: but how in that case it got into the Oxford newspaper passes conjecture.

His expulsion from Oxford brought to a summary conclusion his boyish passion for Miss Harriet Grove. She would have no more to say to him; but I cannot see from his own letters, and those of Miss Hellen Shelley, that there had ever been much love on her side; neither can I find any reason to believe that it continued long on his. Mr. Middleton follows Captain Medwin, who was determined that on Shelley's part it should be an enduring passion, and pressed into its service as testimonies some matters which had nothing to do with it. He says "Queen Mab" was dedicated to Harriet Grove, whereas it was certainly dedicated to Harriet Shelley; he even prints the dedication with the title, "To Harriet G.," whereas in the original the name of Harriet is only followed by asterisks; and of another little poem, he says, "That Shelley's disappointment in love affected him acutely, may be seen by some lines inscribed erroneously, 'On F. G.,' instead of 'H. G.,' and doubtless of a much earlier date than assigned by Mrs. Shelley to the fragment." Now, I know the circumstances to which the fragment refers. The initials of the lady's name were F. G., and the date assigned to the fragment, 1817, was strictly correct. The intrinsic evidence of both poems will show their utter inapplicability to Miss Harriet Grove.

First let us see what Shelley himself says of her, in letters to Mr. Hogg: —

"Dec. 23, 1810. — Her disposition was in all probability divested of the enthusiasm by which mine is characterized. . . . My sister attempted sometimes to plead my cause, but unsuccessfully. She said: 'Even supposing I take your representation of your brother's qualities and sentiments, which, as you coincide in and admire, I may fairly imagine to be exaggerated, although you may not be aware of the exaggeration, what right have I, admitting that he is so superior, to enter into an intimacy which must end in delusive disappointment when he finds how really inferior I am to the being his heated imagination has pictured?'

"Dec. 26, 1810. — Circumstances have operated in such a manner that the attainment of the object of my heart was impossible, whether on account of extraneous influences, or from a feeling which possessed her mind, which told her not to deceive another, not to give him the possibility of disappointment.

"Jan. 3, 1811. — She is no longer mine. She abhors me as a sceptic, as what she was before.

"Jan. 11, 1811. — She is gone. She is lost to me for ever. She is married — married to a clod of earth. She will become as insensible herself: all those fine capabilities will moulder."

Next let us see what Miss Hellen Shelley says of the matter: —

"His disappointment in losing the lady of his love had a great effect upon him. . . . It was not put an end to by *mutual* consent; but both parties were very young, and her father did not think the marriage would be for his daughter's happiness. He, however, with truly honourable feeling, would not have persisted in his objection if his daughter had considered herself bound by a promise to my brother; but this was not the case, and time healed the wound by means of another Harriet, whose name and similar complexion perhaps attracted the attention of my brother."

And lastly, let us see what the young lady's brother (C. H. G.) says of it: —

"After our visit at Field Place (in the year 1810), we went to my brother's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where Bysshe, his mother, and Elizabeth joined us, and a very happy month we spent. Bysshe was full of life and spirits, and very well pleased with his successful devotion to my sister. In the course of that summer, to the best of my recollection, after we had retired into Wiltshire, a continual correspondence was going on, as I believe, between Bysshe and my sister Harriet. But she became uneasy at the tone of his letters on speculative subjects, at first consulting my mother, and subsequently my father also, on the subject. This led at last, though I cannot exactly tell how, to the dissolution of an engagement between Bysshe and my sister which had previously been permitted both by his father and mine."

We have here, I think, as unimpassioned a damsel as may be met in a summer's day. And now let us see the poems.

First, the dedication of "Queen Mab": bearing in mind that the poem was begun in 1812, and finished in 1813, and that, to say nothing of the unsuitability of the offering to her who two years before had abhorred him as a sceptic and married a clod, she had never done or said any one thing that would justify her love being described as that which had

warded off from him the scorn of the world: quite the contrary: as far as in her lay, she had embittered it to the utmost.

TO HARRIET

*Whose is the love that, gleaming thro' the world,
Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn?
Whose is the warm and partial praise,
Virtue's most sweet reward?*

*Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul
Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
And loved mankind the more?*

*Harriet! on thine: — thou wert my purer mind,
Thou wert the inspiration of my song;
Thine are these early wilding flowers,
Though garlanded by me.*

*Then press into thy breast this pledge of love,
And know, though time may change and years
 may roll
Each flowret gathered in my heart
It consecrates to thine.*

Next the verses on F. G.: —

*Her voice did quiver as we parted,
Yet knew I not that heart was broken
From which it came, and I departed,
Heeding not the words then spoken.
Misery — oh, Misery!
This world is all too wide for thee!*

Can anything be more preposterously inappropriate to his parting with Harriet Grove? These verses relate to a far more interesting person and a deeply tragic event; but they belong, as I have said, to the year 1817, a later period than this article embraces.

From Oxford the two friends proceeded to London, where they took a joint lodging, in which, after a time, Shelley was left alone, living uncomfortably on precarious resources. It was here that the second Harriet consoled him for the loss of the first, who, I feel thoroughly convinced, never more troubled his repose.

To the circumstances of Shelley's first marriage I find no evidence but in my own recollection of what he told me respecting it. He often spoke to me of it; and with all allowance for the degree in which his imagination coloured events, I see no improbability in the narration.

Harriet Westbrook, he said, was a schoolfellow of one of his sisters; and when, after his expulsion from Oxford, he was in London, without money, his father having refused him all assistance, this sister had requested her fair schoolfellow to be the medium of conveying to him such small sums as she and her sisters could afford to send, and other little presents which they thought would be acceptable. Under these circumstances the ministry of the young and beautiful girl presented itself like that of a guardian angel, and there was a charm about their intercourse which he readily persuaded himself could not be exhausted in the duration of life. The result was that in August, 1811, they eloped to Scotland, and were married in Edinburgh. Their journey had absorbed their stock of money. They took a lodging, and Shelley immediately told the landlord who they were, what they had come for, and the exhaustion of their resources, and asked him if he would take them in, and advance them money to get married and to carry them on till they could get a remittance. This the man agreed to do, on condition that Shelley would treat him and his friends to a supper in honour of the occasion. It was arranged accordingly; but the man was more obtrusive and officious than Shelley was disposed to tolerate. The marriage was concluded, and in the evening Shelley and his bride were alone together, when the man tapped at their door. Shelley opened it, and the landlord said to him — "It is customary here at weddings for the guests to come in, in the middle of the night, and wash the bride with whisky." "I immediately," said Shelley, "caught up my brace of pistols, and pointing them both at him, said to him, — 'I have had enough of your impertinence; if you give me any more of it I will blow your brains out;' on which he ran or rather tumbled down stairs, and I bolted the doors."

The custom of washing the bride with whisky is more likely to have been so made known to him than to have been imagined by him.

Leaving Edinburgh, the young couple led for some time a wandering life. At the lakes they were kindly received by the Duke of Norfolk, and by others through his influence. They then went to Ireland, landed at Cork, visited the lakes of Killarney, and stayed some time in Dublin, where Shelley became a warm repealer and emancipator. They then went to the Isle of Man, then to Nant Gwillt in Radnorshire, then to Lymouth near Barnstaple, then came for a short time to London; then went to reside in a furnished house belonging to Mr. Maddocks at Tanyrallt, near Tremadoc, in Caernarvonshire. Their residence at this place was made chiefly remarkable by an imaginary attack on his life, which was followed by their immediately leaving Wales.

Mr. Hogg inserts several letters relative to this romance of a night: the following extract from one of Harriet Shelley's, dated from Dublin, March 12th, 1813, will give a sufficient idea of it: —

“ Mr. Shelley promised you a recital of the horrible events that caused us to leave Wales. I have undertaken the task, as I wish to spare him, in the present nervous state of his health, everything that can recall to his mind the horrors of that night, which I will relate.

On the night of the 26th February we retired to bed between ten and eleven o'clock. We had been in bed about half an hour, when Mr. S—— heard a noise proceeding from one of the parlours. He immediately went down stairs with two pistols which he had loaded that night, expecting to have occasion for them. He went into the billiard-room, when he heard footsteps retreating; he followed into another little room, which was called an office. He there saw a man in the act of quitting the room through a glass window which opened into the shrubbery; the man fired at Mr. S——, which he avoided. Bysshe then fired, but it flashed in the pan. The man then knocked Bysshe down, and they struggled on the ground. Bysshe then fired his second pistol, which he thought wounded him in the shoulder, as he uttered a shriek and got up, when he said these words — “ By God, I will be revenged. I will murder your wife, and will ravish your sister! By God, I will be revenged! ” He then fled, as we hoped for the night. Our servants were not gone to bed, but were just going when this horrible affair happened. This was about eleven o'clock. We all assembled in the parlour, where we remained for two hours. Mr. S—— then advised us to retire, thinking it was impossible he would make a second attack. We left Bysshe and our manservant — who had only arrived that day, and who knew nothing of the house — to sit up. I had been in bed three hours when I heard a pistol go off. I immediately ran down stairs, when I perceived that Bysshe's flannel gown had been shot through, and the window curtain. Bysshe had sent Daniel to see what hour it was, when he heard a noise at the window; he went there, and a man thrust his arm through the glass and fired at him. Thank heaven! the ball went through his gown and he remained unhurt. Mr. S—— happened to stand sideways; had he stood fronting, the ball must have killed him. Bysshe fired his pistol, but it would not go off; he then aimed a blow at him with an old sword which we found in the house. The assassin attempted to get the sword from him, and just as he was pulling it away Dan rushed into the room, when he made his escape. This was at four in the morning. It had been a most dreadful night; the wind was as loud as thunder, and the rain descended in torrents. Nothing has been heard of him, and we have every reason to believe it was no stranger, as there is a man. . . . who, the next morning, went and told the shopkeepers that it was a tale of Mr. Shelley's to impose upon them, that he

might leave the country without paying his bills. This they believed, and none of them attempted to do anything towards his discovery. We left Tanyrallt on Sunday."

Mr. Hogg subjoins: —

"Persons acquainted with the localities and with the circumstances, and who had carefully investigated the matter, were unanimous in the opinion that no such attack was ever made.

"I may state more particularly the result of the investigation to which Mr. Hogg alludes. I was in North Wales in the summer of 1813, and heard the matter much talked of. Persons who had examined the premises on the following morning had found that the grass of the lawn appeared to have been much trampled and rolled on, but there were no footmarks on the wet ground, except between the beaten spot and the window; and the impression of the ball on the wainscot showed that the pistol had been fired towards the window, and not from it. This appeared conclusive as to the whole series of operations having taken place from within. The mental phenomena in which this sort of semi-delusion originated will be better illustrated by one which occurred at a later period, and which, though less tragical in its appearances, was more circumstantial in its development, and more perseveringly adhered to. It will not come within the scope of this article.

I saw Shelley for the first time in 1812, just before he went to Tanyrallt. I saw him again once or twice before I went to North Wales in 1813. On my return he was residing at Bracknell, and invited me to visit him there. This I did, and found him with his wife Harriet, her sister Eliza, and his newly-born daughter Ianthe.

Mr. Hogg says: —

"This accession to his family did not appear to afford him any gratification, or to create an interest. He never spoke of this child to me, and to this hour I never set eyes on her."

Mr. Hogg is mistaken about Shelley's feelings as to his first child. He was extremely fond of it, and would walk up and down a room with it in his arms for a long time together, singing to it a monotonous melody of his own making, which ran on the repetition of a word of his own making. His song was "Yáhmani, Yáhmani, Yáhmani, Yáhmani." It did not please me, but, what was more important, it pleased the child, and lulled it when it was fretful. Shelley was extremely fond of his children. He was pre-eminently an affectionate father. But to this first-born there were accompaniments which did not please him. The child had a wet-nurse whom he did not like, and was much looked after by his wife's sister, whom he intensely disliked. I have often thought that if Harriet had nursed her own

child, and if this sister had not lived with them, the link of their married love would not have been so readily broken. But of this hereafter, when we come to speak of the separation.

At Bracknell, Shelley was surrounded by a numerous society, all in a great measure of his own opinions in relation to religion and politics, and the larger portion of them in relation to vegetable diet. But they wore their rue with a difference. Every one of them adopting some of the articles of the faith of their general church, had each nevertheless some predominant crotchet of his or her own, which left a number of open questions for earnest and not always temperate discussion. I was sometimes irreverent enough to laugh at the fervour with which opinions utterly un conducive to any practical result were battled for as matters of the highest importance to the well-being of mankind; Harriet Shelley was always ready to laugh with me, and we thereby both lost caste with some of the more hot-headed of the party. Mr. Hogg was not there during my visit, but he knew the whole of the persons there assembled, and has given some account of them under their initials, which for all public purposes are as well as their names.

The person among them best worth remembering was the gentleman whom Mr. Hogg calls J. F. N., of whom he relates some anecdotes.

I will add one or two from my own experience. He was an estimable man and an agreeable companion, and he was not the less amusing that he was the absolute impersonation of a single theory, or rather of two single theories rolled into one. He held that all diseases and all aberrations, moral and physical, had their origin in the use of animal food and of fermented and spirituous liquors; that the universal adoption of a diet of roots, fruits, and distilled water, would restore the golden age of universal health, purity, and peace; that this most ancient and sublime morality was mystically inculcated in the most ancient Zodiac, which was that of Dendera; that this Zodiac was divided into two hemispheres, the upper hemisphere being the realm of Oromazes or the principle of good, the lower that of Ahrimanes or the principle of evil; that each of these hemispheres was again divided into two compartments, and that the four lines of division radiating from the centre were the prototype of the Christian cross. The two compartments of Oromazes were those of Uranus or Brahma the Creator, and of Saturn or Veishnu the Preserver. The two compartments of Ahrimanes were those of Jupiter or Seva the Destroyer, and of Apollo or Krishna the Restorer. The great moral doctrine was thus symbolized in the Zodiacal signs:—In the first compartment, Taurus the Bull, having in the ancient Zodiac a torch in his mouth, was the type of eternal light. Cancer the Crab was the type of celestial matter, sleeping under the all-covering water, on which Brahma floated in a lotus-flower for millions of ages. From the union, typified by Gemini, of light and celestial matter, issued in the second compartment Leo, Primogenial Love,

mounted on the back of a Lion, who produced the pure and perfect nature of things in Virgo, and Libra the Balance denoted the coincidence of the ecliptic with the equator, and the equality of man's happy existence. In the third compartment, the first entrance of evil into the system was typified by the change of celestial into terrestrial matter—Cancer into Scorpio. Under this evil influence man became a hunter, Sagittarius the Archer, and pursued the wild animals, typified by Capricorn. Then, with animal food and cookery, came death into the world, and all our woe. But in the fourth compartment, Dhanwantari or Æsculapius, Aquarius the Waterman, arose from the sea, typified by Pisces the Fish, with a jug of pure water and a bunch of fruit, and brought back the period of universal happiness under Aries the Ram, whose benignant ascendancy was the golden fleece of the Argonauts, and the true talisman of Oromazes.

He saw the Zodiac in everything. I was walking with him one day on a common near Bracknell, when we came on a public house which had the sign of the Horse-shoes. They were four on the sign, and he immediately determined that this number had been handed down from remote antiquity as representative of the compartments of the Zodiac. He stepped into the public house, and said to the landlord, "Your sign is the Horse-shoes?"—"Yes, sir." "This sign has always four Horse-shoes?"—"Why mostly, sir." "Not always?"—"I think I have seen three." "I cannot divide the Zodiac into three. But it is mostly four. Do you know why it is mostly four?"—"Why, sir, I suppose because a horse has four legs." He bounced out in great indignation, and as soon as I joined him, he said to me, "Did you ever see such a fool?"

I have also very agreeable reminiscences of Mrs. B. and her daughter Cornelia. Of these ladies Shelley says (Hogg, ii. 515):—

"I have begun to learn Italian again. Cornelia assists me in this language. Did I not once tell you that I thought her cold and reserved? She is the reverse of this, as she is the reverse of everything bad. She inherits all the divinity of her mother."

Mr. Hogg could never learn why Shelley called Mrs. B. Meimouné. In fact he called her, not Meimouné, but Maimuna, from Southey's *Thalaba*:—

*Her face was as a damsel's face,
And yet her hair was grey.*

She was a young-looking woman for her age, and her hair was as white as snow.

About the end of 1813, Shelley was troubled by one of his most extraordinary delusions. He fancied that a fat old woman who sat opposite to him in a mail coach was afflicted with elephantiasis, that the disease

was infectious and incurable, and that he had caught it from her. He was continually on the watch for symptoms; his legs were to swell to the size of an elephant's, and his skin was to be crumpled over like goose-skin. He would draw the skin of his own hands, arms, and neck very tight, and if he discovered any deviation from smoothness, he would seize the person next to him, and endeavour by a corresponding pressure to see if any corresponding deviation existed. He often startled young ladies in an evening party by this singular process, which was as instantaneous as a flash of lightning. His friends took various methods of dispelling the delusion. I quoted to him the words of Lucretius: —

*Est elephas morbus, qui propter flumina Nilī
Gignitur Aegypto in media, neque praeterea usquam.*

He said these verses were the greatest comfort he had. When he found that, as the days rolled on, his legs retained their proportion, and his skin its smoothness, the delusion died away.

I have something more to say belonging to this year 1813, but it will come better in connexion with the events of the succeeding year. In the meantime I will mention one or two traits of character in which chronology is unimportant.

It is to be remarked that, with the exception of the clergyman from whom he received his first instructions, the Reverend Mr. Edwards, of Horsham, Shelley never came, directly or indirectly, under any authority, public or private, for which he entertained, or had much cause to entertain, any degree of respect. His own father, the Brentford schoolmaster, the head master of Eton, the Master and Fellows of his college at Oxford, the Lord Chancellor Eldon, all successively presented themselves to him in the light of tyrants and oppressors. It was perhaps from the recollection of his early preceptor that he felt a sort of poetical regard for country clergymen, and was always pleased when he fell in with one who had a sympathy with him in classical literature, and was willing to pass *sub silentio* the debatable ground between them. But such an one was of rare occurrence. This recollection may also have influenced his feeling under the following transitory impulse.

He had many schemes of life. Amongst them all, the most singular that ever crossed his mind was that of entering the church. Whether he had ever thought of it before, or whether it only arose on the moment, I cannot say: the latter is most probable; but I well remember the occasion. We were walking in the early summer through a village where there was a good vicarage house, with a nice garden, and the front wall of the vicarage was covered with corchorus in full flower, a plant less common then than it has since become. He stood some time admiring the vicarage wall. The extreme quietness of the scene, the pleasant pathway through the village churchyard, and the brightness of the summer morn-

ing, apparently concurred to produce the impression under which he suddenly said to me, — “I feel strongly inclined to enter the church.” “What,” I said, “to become a clergyman, with your ideas of the faith?” “Assent to the supernatural part of it,” he said, “is merely technical. Of the moral doctrines of Christianity I am a more decided disciple than many of its more ostentatious professors. And consider for a moment how much good a good clergyman may do. In his teaching as a scholar and a moralist; in his example as a gentleman and a man of regular life; in the consolation of his personal intercourse and of his charity among the poor, to whom he may often prove a most beneficent friend when they have no other to comfort them. It is an admirable institution that admits the possibility of diffusing such men over the surface of the land. And am I to deprive myself of the advantages of this admirable institution because there are certain technicalities to which I cannot give my adhesion, but which I need not bring prominently forward?” I told him I thought he would find more restraint in the office than would suit his aspirations. He walked on for some time thoughtfully, then started another subject, and never returned to that of entering the church.

He was especially fond of the novels of Brown — Charles Brockden Brown, the American, who died at the age of thirty-nine.

The first of these novels was *Wieland*. Wieland's father passed much of his time alone in a summer-house, where he died of spontaneous combustion. This summer-house made a great impression on Shelley, and in looking for a country house he always examined if he could find such a summer-house, or a place to erect one.

The second was *Ormond*. The heroine of this novel, Constantia Dudley, held one of the highest places, if not the very highest place, in Shelley's idealities of female character.

The third was *Edgar Huntley; or, the Sleepwalker*. In this his imagination was strangely captivated by the picture of Clitheroe in his sleep digging a grave under a tree.

The fourth was *Arthur Mervyn*: chiefly remarkable for the powerful description of the yellow fever in Philadelphia and the adjacent country, a subject previously treated in *Ormond*. No descriptions of pestilence surpass these of Brown. The transfer of the hero's affections from a simple peasant girl to a rich Jewess, displeased Shelley extremely, and he could only account for it on the ground that it was the only way in which Brown could bring his story to an uncomfortable conclusion. The three preceding tales had ended tragically.

These four tales were unquestionably works of great genius, and were remarkable for the way in which natural causes were made to produce the semblance of supernatural effects. The superstitious terror of romance could scarcely be more strongly excited than by the perusal of *Wieland*.

Brown wrote two other novels, *Jane Talbot* and *Philip Stanley*, in which

he abandoned this system, and confined himself to the common business of life. They had little comparative success.

Brown's four novels, Schiller's *Robbers*, and Goethe's *Faust*, were, of all the works with which he was familiar, those which took the deepest root in his mind, and had the strongest influence in the formation of his character. He was an assiduous student of the great classical poets, and among these his favourite heroines were Nausicaa and Antigone. I do not remember that he greatly admired any of our old English poets, excepting Shakspeare and Milton. He devotedly admired Wordsworth and Coleridge, and in a minor degree Southey: these had great influence on his style, and Coleridge especially on his imagination; but admiration is one thing and assimilation is another; and nothing so blended itself with the structure of his interior mind as the creations of Brown. Nothing stood so clearly before his thoughts as a perfect combination of the purely ideal and possibly real, as Constantia Dudley.

He was particularly pleased with Wordsworth's Stanzas written in a pocket copy of Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*. He said the fifth of these stanzas always reminded him of me. I told him the four first stanzas were in many respects applicable to him. He said: "It was a remarkable instance of Wordsworth's insight into nature, that he should have made intimate friends of two imaginary characters so essentially dissimilar, and yet severally so true to the actual characters of two friends, in a poem written long before they were known to each other, and while they were both boys, and totally unknown to him."

The delight of Wordsworth's first personage in the gardens of the happy castle, the restless spirit that drove him to wander, the exhaustion with which he returned and abandoned himself to repose, might all in these stanzas have been sketched to the life from Shelley. The end of the fourth stanza is especially apposite: —

*Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was
Whenever from our valley he withdrew;
For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.
Some thought he was a lover, and did woo:
Some thought far worse of him, and judged him wrong:
But verse was what he had been wedded to;
And his own mind did like a tempest strong
Come to him thus, and drive the weary wight along.*

He often repeated to me, as applicable to himself; a somewhat similar passage from *Childe Harold*: —

— *On the sea*
The boldest steer but where their ports invited:

*But there are wanderers o'er Eternity,
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchor'd ne'er
shall be.*

His vegetable diet entered for something into his restlessness. When he was fixed in a place he adhered to this diet consistently and conscientiously, but it certainly did not agree with him; it made him weak and nervous, and exaggerated the sensitiveness of his imagination. Then arose those thick-coming fancies which almost invariably preceded his change of place. While he was living from inn to inn he was obliged to live, as he said, "on what he could get"; that is to say, like other people. When he got well under this process he gave all the credit to locomotion, and held himself to have thus benefitted, not in consequence of his change of regimen, but in spite of it. Once, when I was living in the country, I received a note from him wishing me to call on him in London. I did so, and found him ill in bed. He said, "You are looking well. I suppose you go on in your old way, living on animal food and fermented liquor?" I answered in the affirmative. "And here," he said, "you see a vegetable feeder overcome by disease." I said, "Perhaps the diet is the cause." This he would by no means allow; but it was not long before he was again posting through some yet unvisited wilds, and recovering his health as usual, by living "on what he could get."

He had a prejudice against theatres which I took some pains to overcome. I induced him one evening to accompany me to a representation of the *School for Scandal*. When, after the scenes which exhibited Charles Surface in his jollity, the scene returned, in the fourth act, to Joseph's library, Shelley said to me—"I see the purpose of this comedy. It is to associate virtue with bottles and glasses, and villainy with books." I had great difficulty to make him stay to the end. He often talked of "the withering and perverting spirit of comedy." I do not think he ever went to another. But I remember his absorbed attention to Miss O'Neill's performance of Bianca in *Fazio*, and it is evident to me that she was always in his thoughts when he drew the character of Beatrice in the *Cenci*.

In the season of 1817, I persuaded him to accompany me to the opera. The performance was *Don Giovanni*. Before it commenced he asked me if the opera was comic or tragic. I said it was composite,—more comedy than tragedy. After the killing of the Commendatore, he said, "Do you call this comedy?" By degrees he became absorbed in the music and action. I asked him what he thought of Ambrogetti? He said, "He seems to be the very wretch he personates." The opera was followed by a ballet, in which Mdlle. Milanie was the principal *danseuse*. He was enchanted with this lady; said he had never imagined such grace of motion; and the impression was permanent, for in a letter he afterwards wrote to me from Milan he said, "They have no Mdlle. Milanie here."

From this time till he finally left England he was an assiduous frequenter of the Italian Opera. He delighted in the music of Mozart, and especially in the *Nozze di Figaro*, which was performed several times in the early part of 1818.

With the exception of *Fazio*, I do not remember his having been pleased with any performance at an English theatre. Indeed I do not remember his having been present at any but the two above mentioned. I tried in vain to reconcile him to comedy. I repeated to him one day, as an admirable specimen of diction and imagery, Michael Perez's soliloquy in his miserable lodgings, from *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*. When I came to the passage:

*There's an old woman that's now grown to marble,
Dried in this brick-kiln: and she sits i' the chimney
(Which is but three tiles, raised like a house of cards),
The true proportion of an old smoked Sibyl.
There is a young thing, too, that Nature meant
For a maidservant, but 'tis now a monster:
She has a husk about her like a chestnut,
With laziness, and living under the line here:
And these two make a hollow sound together,
Like frogs, or winds between two doors that murmur —*

he said, "There is comedy in its perfection. Society grinds down poor wretches into the dust of abject poverty, till they are scarcely recognizable as human beings; and then, instead of being treated as what they really are, subjects of the deepest pity, they are brought forward as grotesque monstrosities to be laughed at." I said, "You must admit the fineness of the expression." "It is true," he answered; "but the finer it is the worse it is, with such a perversion of sentiment."

I postpone, as I have intimated, till after the appearance of Mr. Hogg's third and fourth volumes, the details of the circumstances which preceded Shelley's separation from his first wife, and those of the separation itself.

There never was a case which more strongly illustrated the truth of Payne Knight's observation, that "the same kind of marriage, which usually ends a comedy, as usually begins a tragedy."

Y Gwir yn erbyn y Byd.

The Truth against the World.

Bardic Maxim

Mr. Hogg's third and fourth volumes not having appeared, and the materials with which Sir Percy and Lady Shelley had supplied him having been resumed by them, and so much of them as it was thought desirable to publish having been edited by Lady Shelley, with a connecting thread of narrative, I shall assume that I am now in possession of all the external

information likely to be available towards the completion of my memoir; and I shall proceed to complete it accordingly, subject to the contingent addition of a postscript, if any subsequent publication should render it necessary.

Lady Shelley says in her preface:

“We saw the book (Mr. Hogg’s) for the first time when it was given to the world. It was impossible to imagine beforehand that from such materials a book could have been produced which has astonished and shocked those who have the greatest right to form an opinion on the character of Shelley; and it was with the most painful feelings of dismay that we perused what we could only look upon as a fantastic caricature, going forth to the public with my apparent sanction, — for it was dedicated to myself.

Our feelings of duty to the memory of Shelley left us no other alternative than to withdraw the materials which we had originally entrusted to his early friend, and which we could not but consider had been strangely mis-used; and to take upon ourselves the task of laying them before the public, connected only by as slight a thread of narrative as would suffice to make them intelligible to the reader.”

I am very sorry, in the outset of this notice, to be under the necessity of dissenting from Lady Shelley respecting the facts of the separation of Shelley and Harriet.

Captain Medwin represented this separation to have taken place by mutual consent. Mr. Leigh Hunt and Mr. Middleton adopted this statement; and in every notice I have seen of it in print it has been received as an established truth.

Lady Shelley says —

“Towards the close of 1813 estrangements, which for some time had been slowly growing between Mr. and Mrs. Shelley, came to a crisis. Separation ensued, and Mrs. Shelley returned to her father’s house. Here she gave birth to her second child — a son who died in 1826.

The occurrences of this painful epoch in Shelley’s life, and of the causes which led to them, I am spared from relating. In Mary Shelley’s own words — “This is not the time to relate the truth; and I should reject any colouring of the truth. No account of these events has ever been given at all approaching reality in their details, either as regards himself or others; nor shall I further allude to them than to remark that the errors of action committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far as he only is concerned, be fearlessly avowed by those who loved him, in the firm conviction that, were they judged impartially, his character would stand in fairer and brighter light than that of any contemporary.”

Of those remaining who were intimate with Shelley at this time, each has given us a different version of this sad event, coloured by his own views or personal feelings. Evidently Shelley confided to none of these friends. We, who bear his name, and are of his family, have in our possession papers written by his own hand, which in after years may make the story of his life complete; and which few now living, except Shelley's own children, have ever perused.

One mistake, which has gone forth to the world, we feel ourselves called upon positively to contradict.

Harriet's death has sometimes been ascribed to Shelley. This is entirely false. There was no immediate connexion whatever between her tragic end and any conduct on the part of her husband. It is true, however, that it was a permanent source of the deepest sorrow to him; for never during all his after life did the dark shade depart which had fallen on his gentle and sensitive nature from the self-sought grave of the companion of his early youth."

This passage ends the sixth chapter. The seventh begins thus —

"To the family of Godwin, Shelley had, from the period of his self-introduction at Keswick, been an object of interest; and the acquaintanceship which had sprung up between them during the poet's occasional visits to London had grown into a cordial friendship. It was in the society and sympathy of the Godwins that Shelley sought and found some relief in his present sorrow. He was still extremely young. His anguish, his isolation, his difference from other men, his gifts of genius and eloquent enthusiasm, made a deep impression on Godwin's daughter Mary, now a girl of sixteen, who had been accustomed to hear Shelley spoken of as something rare and strange. To her, as they met one eventful day in St. Pancras' churchyard, by her mother's grave, Bysshe, in burning words, poured forth the tale of his wild past — how he had suffered, how he had been misled; and how, if supported by her love, he hoped in future years to enrol his name with the wise and good who had done battle for their fellow-men, and been true through all adverse storms to the cause of humanity.

Unhesitatingly she placed her hands in his, and linked her fortune with his own; and most truthfully, as the remaining portion of these *Memorials* will prove, was the pledge of both redeemed."

I ascribe it to inexperience of authorship, that the sequence of words does not, in these passages, coincide with the sequence of facts: for in the order of words, the present sorrow would appear to be the death of Harriet. This however occurred two years and a half after the separation, and the union of his fate with Mary Godwin was simultaneous with it. Respecting

this separation, whatever degree of confidence Shelley may have placed in his several friends, there are some facts which speak for themselves and admit of no misunderstanding.

The Scotch marriage had taken place in August, 1811. In a letter which he wrote to a female friend sixteen months later (Dec. 10, 1812), he had said —

“How is Harriet a fine lady? You indirectly accuse her in your letter of this offence — to me the most unpardonable of all. The ease and simplicity of her habits, the unassuming plainness of her address, the uncalculated connexion of her thought and speech, have ever formed in my eyes her greatest charms: and none of these are compatible with fashionable life, or the attempted assumption of its vulgar and noisy *éclat*. You have a prejudice to contend with in making me convert to this last opinion of yours, which, so long as I have a living and daily witness of its futility before me, I fear will be insurmountable.” — *Memorials*, p. 44.

Thus there had been no estrangement to the end of 1812. My own memory sufficiently attests that there was none in 1813.

From Bracknell, in the autumn of 1813, Shelley went to the Cumberland lakes; then to Edinburgh. In Edinburgh he became acquainted with a young Brazilian named Baptista, who had gone there to study medicine by his father's desire, and not from any vocation to the science, which he cordially abominated, as being all hypothesis, without the fraction of a basis of certainty to rest on. They corresponded after Shelley left Edinburgh, and subsequently renewed their intimacy in London. He was a frank, warm-hearted, very gentlemanly young man. He was a great enthusiast, and sympathized earnestly in all Shelley's views, even to the adoption of vegetable diet. He made some progress in a translation of *Queen Mab* into Portuguese. He showed me a sonnet, which he intended to prefix to his translation. It began —

Sublime Shelley, cantor di verdade!

and ended —

Surja Queen Mab a restaurar o mendo.

I have forgotten the intermediate lines. But he died early, of a disease of the lungs. The climate did not suit him, and he exposed himself to it incautiously.

Shelley returned to London shortly before Christmas, then took a furnished house for two or three months at Windsor, visiting London occasionally. In March, 1814, he married Harriet a second time, according to the following certificate: —

MARRIAGES IN MARCH 1814.

164. Percy Bysshe Shelley and Harriet Shelley (formerly Harriet Westbrook, Spinster, a Minor), both of this Parish, were remarried in this Church by Licence (the parties having been already married to each other according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of Scotland), in order to obviate all doubts that have arisen, or shall or may arise, touching or concerning the validity of the aforesaid Marriage (by and with the consent of John Westbrook, the natural and lawful father of the said Minor), this Twenty-fourth day of March, in the Year 1814.

By me,

EDWARD WILLIAMS, *Curate*.

This Marriage was
solemnized between us

{ PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY,
HARRIET SHELLEY, formerly
Harriet Westbrook.

In the presence of

{ JOHN WESTBROOK,
JOHN STANLEY.

The above is a true extract from the Register Book of Marriages belonging to the Parish of Saint George, Hanover-square; extracted thence this eleventh day of April, 1859. — By me,

H. WEIGHTMAN, *Curate*.

It is, therefore, not correct to say that "estrangements which had been slowly growing came to a crisis towards the close of 1813." The date of the above certificate is conclusive on the point. The second marriage could not have taken place under such circumstances. Divorce would have been better for both parties, and the dissolution of the first marriage could have been easily obtained in Scotland.

There was no estrangement, no shadow of a thought of separation, till Shelley became acquainted, not long after the second marriage, with the lady who was subsequently his second wife.

The separation did not take place by mutual consent. I cannot think that Shelley ever so represented it. He never did so to me: and the account which Harriet herself gave me of the entire proceeding was decidedly contradictory of any such supposition.

He might well have said, after first seeing Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, "*Ut vidi! ut perii!*" Nothing that I ever read in tale or history could present a more striking image of a sudden, violent, irresistible, uncontrollable passion, than that under which I found him labouring when, at his request, I went up from the country to call on him in London. Between his old feelings towards Harriet, *from whom he was not then separated*, and his new passion for Mary, he showed in his looks, in his ges-

tures, in his speech, the state of a mind "suffering, like a little kingdom, the nature of an insurrection." His eyes were bloodshot, his hair and dress disordered. He caught up a bottle of laudanum, and said: "I never part from this." He added: "I am always repeating to myself your lines from Sophocles:

*Man's happiest lot is not to be:
And when we tread life's thorny steep,
Most blest are they, who earliest free
Descend to death's eternal sleep."*

Again, he said more calmly: "Every one who knows me must know that the partner of my life should be one who can feel poetry and understand philosophy. Harriet is a noble animal, but she can do neither." I said, "It always appeared to me that you were very fond of Harriet." Without affirming or denying this, he answered: "But you did not know how I hated her sister."

The term "noble animal" he applied to his wife, in conversation with another friend now living, intimating that the nobleness which he thus ascribed to her would induce her to acquiesce in the inevitable transfer of his affections to their new shrine. She did not so acquiesce, and he cut the Gordian knot of the difficulty by leaving England with Miss Godwin on the 28th of July, 1814.

Shortly after this I received a letter from Harriet, wishing to see me. I called on her at her father's house in Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square. She then gave me her own account of the transaction, which, as I have said, decidedly contradicted the supposition of anything like separation by mutual consent.

She at the same time gave me a description, by no means flattering, of Shelley's new love, whom I had not then seen. I said, "If you have described her correctly, what could he see in her?" "Nothing," she said, "but that her name was Mary, and not only Mary, but Mary Wollstonecraft."

The lady had nevertheless great personal and intellectual attractions, though it is not to be wondered at that Harriet could not see them.

I feel it due to the memory of Harriet to state my most decided conviction that her conduct as a wife was as pure, as true, as absolutely faultless, as that of any who for such conduct are held most in honour.

Mr. Hogg says: "Shelley told me his friend Robert Southey once said to him, 'A man ought to be able to live with any woman. You see that I can, and so ought you. It comes to pretty much the same thing, I apprehend. There is no great choice or difference.'" — *Hogg*: vol. i, p. 423. *Any woman*, I suspect, must have been said with some qualification. But such an one as either of them had first chosen, Southey saw no reason to change.

Shelley gave me some account of an interview he had had with Southey. It was after his return from his first visit to Switzerland, in the autumn of 1814. I forget whether it was in town or country; but it was in Southey's study, in which was suspended a portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft. Whether Southey had been in love with this lady, is more than I know. That he had devotedly admired her is clear from his *Epistle to Amos Cottle*, prefixed to the latter's *Icelandic Poetry* (1797); in which, after describing the scenery of Norway, he says: —

*Scenes like these
Have almost lived before me, when I gazed
Upon their fair resemblance traced by him,
Who sung the banished man of Ardebeil;
Or to the eye of Fancy held by her,
Who among women left no equal mind
When from this world she passed; and I could weep
To think that she is to the grave gone down!*

Where a note names Mary Wollstonecraft, the allusion being to her *Letters from Norway*.

Shelley had previously known Southey, and wished to renew or continue friendly relations; but Southey was repulsive. He pointed to the picture, and expressed his bitter regret that the daughter of that angelic woman should have been so misled. It was most probably on this occasion that he made the remark cited by Mr. Hogg: his admiration of Mary Wollstonecraft may have given force to the observation: and as he had known Harriet, he might have thought that, in his view of the matter, she was all that a husband could wish for.

Few are now living who remember Harriet Shelley. I remember her well, and will describe her to the best of my recollection. She had a good figure, light, active, and graceful. Her features were regular and well proportioned. Her hair was light brown, and dressed with taste and simplicity. In her dress she was truly *simplex munditiis*. Her complexion was beautifully transparent; the tint of the blush rose shining through the lily. The tone of her voice was pleasant; her speech the essence of frankness and cordiality; her spirits always cheerful; her laugh spontaneous, hearty, and joyous. She was well educated. She read agreeably and intelligently. She wrote only letters, but she wrote them well. Her manners were good; and her whole aspect and demeanour such manifest emanations of pure and truthful nature, that to be once in her company was to know her thoroughly. She was fond of her husband, and accommodated herself in every way to his tastes. If they mixed in society, she adorned it; if they lived in retirement, she was satisfied; if they travelled, she enjoyed the change of scene.

That Shelley's second wife was intellectually better suited to him than

his first, no one who knew them both will deny; and that a man, who lived so totally out of the ordinary world and in a world of ideas, needed such an ever-present sympathy more than the general run of men, must also be admitted; but Southey, who did not want an intellectual wife, and was contented with his own, may well have thought that Shelley had equal reason to seek no change.

After leaving England, in 1814, the newly-affianced lovers took a tour on the Continent. He wrote to me several letters from Switzerland, which were subsequently published, together with a *Six Weeks' Tour*, written in the form of a journal by the lady with whom his fate was thenceforward indissolubly bound. I was introduced to her on their return.

The rest of 1814 they passed chiefly in London. Perhaps this winter in London was the most solitary period of Shelley's life. I often passed an evening with him at his lodgings, and I do not recollect ever meeting anyone there, excepting Mr. Hogg. Some of his few friends of the preceding year had certainly at that time fallen off from him. At the same time he was short of money, and was trying to raise some on his expectations, from "Jews and their fellow-Christians," as Lord Byron says. One day, as we were walking together on the banks of the Surrey Canal, and discoursing of Wordsworth, and quoting some of his verses, Shelley suddenly said to me: "Do you think Wordsworth could have written such poetry, if he had ever had dealings with money-lenders?" His own example, however, proved that the association had not injured his poetical faculties.

The canal in question was a favourite walk with us. The Croyden Canal branched off from it, and passed very soon into wooded scenery. The Croyden Canal is extinct, and has given place to the, I hope, more useful, but certainly less picturesque, railway. Whether the Surrey exists, I do not know. He had a passion for sailing paper-boats, which he indulged on this canal, and on the Serpentine river. The best spot he had ever found for it was a large pool of transparent water, on a heath above Bracknell, with determined borders free from weeds, which admitted of launching the miniature craft on the windward, and running round to receive it on the leeward, side. On the Serpentine, he would sometimes launch a boat constructed with more than usual care, and freighted with halfpence. He delighted to do this in the presence of boys, who would run round to meet it, and when it landed in safety, and the boys scrambled for their prize, he had difficulty in restraining himself from shouting as loudly as they did. The river was not suitable to this amusement, nor even Virginia Water, on which he sometimes practised it; but the lake was too large to allow of meeting the landing. I sympathized with him in this taste; I had it before I knew him: I am not sure that I did not originate it with him; for which I should scarcely receive the thanks of my friend, Mr. Hogg, who never took any pleasure in it, and cordially abominated it, when, as fre-

quently happened, on a cold winter day, in a walk from Bishopsgate over Bagshot Heath, we came on a pool of water, which Shelley would not part from till he had rigged out a flotilla from any unfortunate letters he happened to have in his pocket. Whatever may be thought of this amusement for grown gentlemen, it was at least innocent amusement, and not mixed up with any "sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

In the summer of 1815, Shelley took a furnished house at Bishopsgate, the eastern entrance of Windsor Park, where he resided till the summer of 1816. At this time he had, by the sacrifice of a portion of his expectations, purchased an annuity of £1000 a-year from his father, who had previously allowed him £200.

I was then living at Marlow, and frequently walked over to pass a few days with him. At the end of August, 1815, we made an excursion on the Thames to Lechlade, in Gloucestershire, and as much higher as there was water to float our skiff. It was a dry season, and we did not get much beyond Inglesham Weir, which was not then, as now, an immovable structure, but the wreck of a movable weir, which had been subservient to the navigation, when the river had been, as it had long ceased to be, navigable to Cricklade. A solitary sluice was hanging by a chain, swinging in the wind and creaking dismally. Our voyage terminated at a spot where the cattle stood entirely across the stream, with the water scarcely covering their hoofs. We started from, and returned to, Old Windsor, and our excursion occupied about ten days. This was, I think, the origin of Shelly's taste for boating, which he retained to the end of his life. On our way up, at Oxford, he was so much out of order that he feared being obliged to return. He had been living chiefly on tea and bread and butter, drinking occasionally a sort of spurious lemonade, made of some powder in a box, which, as he was reading at the time the *Tale of a Tub*, he called *the powder of pimperlimpimp*. He consulted a doctor, who may have done him some good, but it was not apparent. I told him, "If he would allow me to prescribe for him, I would set him to rights." He asked, "What would be your prescription?" I said, "Three mutton chops, well peppered." He said, "Do you really think so?" I said, "I am sure of it." He took the prescription; the success was obvious and immediate. He lived in my way for the rest of our expedition, rowed vigorously, was cheerful, merry, overflowing with animal spirits, and had certainly one week of thorough enjoyment of life. We passed two nights in a comfortable inn at Lechlade, and his lines, "A Summer Evening on the Thames at Lechlade," were written then and there. Mrs. Shelley (the second, who always bore his name), who was with us, made a diary of the little trip, which I suppose is lost.

The whole of the winter 1815-16 was passed quietly at Bishopsgate. Mr. Hogg often walked down from London; and I, as before, walked over from Marlow. This winter was, as Mr. Hogg expressed it, a mere Atticism

Our studies were exclusively Greek. To the best of my recollection, we were, throughout the whole period, his only visitors. One or two persons called on him; but they were not to his mind, and were not encouraged to reappear. The only exception was a physician whom he had called in; the Quaker, Dr. Pope, of Staines. This worthy old gentleman came more than once, not as a doctor, but a friend. He liked to discuss theology with Shelley. Shelley at first avoided the discussion, saying his opinions would not be to the Doctor's taste; but the Doctor answered, "I like to hear thee talk, friend Shelley; I see thee art very deep."

At this time Shelley wrote his *Alastor*. He was at a loss for a title, and I proposed that which he adopted: *Alastor; or, the Spirit of Solitude*. The Greek word Ἀλάστωρ is an evil genius *κακοδαίμων*, though the sense of the two words is somewhat different, as in the *Φανείς Ἀλάστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων ποθέν* of Aeschylus. The poem treated the spirit of solitude as a spirit of evil. I mention the true meaning of the word because many have supposed *Alastor* to be the name of the hero of the poem.

He published this, with some minor poems, in the course of the winter.

In the early summer of 1816, the spirit of restlessness again came over him, and resulted in a second visit to the Continent. The change of scene was preceded, as more than once before, by a mysterious communication from a person seen only by himself, warning him of immediate personal perils to be incurred by him if he did not instantly depart.

I was alone at Bishopsgate, with him and Mrs. Shelley, when the visitation alluded to occurred. About the middle of the day, intending to take a walk, I went into the hall for my hat. His was there, and mine was not. I could not imagine what had become of it; but as I could not walk without it, I returned to the library. After some time had elapsed, Mrs. Shelley came in, and gave me an account which she had just received from himself, of the visitor and his communication. I expressed some scepticism on the subject, on which she left me, and Shelley came in, with my hat in his hand. He said, "Mary tells me, you do not believe that I have had a visit from Williams." I said, "I told her there were some improbabilities in the narration." He said, "You know Williams of Tremadoc?" I said, "I do." He said, "It was he who was here today. He came to tell me of a plot laid by my father and uncle, to entrap me and lock me up. He was in great haste, and could not stop a minute, and I walked with him to Egham." I said, "What hat did you wear?" He said, "This, to be sure." I said, "I wish you would put it on." He put it on, and it went over his face. I said, "You could not have walked to Egham in that hat." He said, "I snatched it up hastily, and perhaps I kept it in my hand. I certainly walked with Williams to Egham, and he told me what I have said. You are very sceptical." I said, "If you are certain of what you say, my scepticism cannot affect your certainty." He said, "It is very hard on a man who has devoted his life to the pursuit of truth, who has made great

sacrifices and incurred great sufferings for it, to be treated as a visionary. If I do not know that I saw Williams, how do I know that I see you?" I said, "An idea may have the force of a sensation: but the oftener a sensation is repeated, the greater is the probability of its origin in reality. You saw me yesterday, and will see me tomorrow." He said, "I can see Williams tomorrow if I please. He told me he was stopping at the Turk's Head Coffee-house, in the Strand, and should be there two days. I want to convince you that I am not under a delusion. Will you walk with me to London tomorrow, to see him?" I said, "I would most willingly do so." The next morning after an early breakfast we set off on our walk to London. We had got half way down Egham Hill, when he suddenly turned round, and said to me, "I do not think we shall find Williams at the Turk's Head." I said, "Neither do I." He said, "You say that, because you do not think he has been there; but he mentioned a contingency under which he might leave town yesterday, and he has probably done so." I said, "At any rate, we should know that he has been there." He said, "I will take other means of convincing you. I will write to him. Suppose we take a walk through the forest." We turned about on our new direction, and were out all day. Some days passed, and I heard no more of the matter. One morning he said to me, "I have some news of Williams; a letter and an enclosure." I said, "I shall be glad to see the letter." He said, "I cannot show you the letter; I will show you the enclosure. It is a diamond necklace. I think you know me well enough to be sure I would not throw away my own money on such a thing, and that if I have it, it must have been sent me by somebody else. It has been sent me by Williams." "For what purpose," I asked. He said, "To prove his identity and his sincerity." "Surely," I said, "your showing me a diamond necklace will prove nothing but that you have one to show." "Then," he said, "I will not show it you. If you will not believe me, I must submit to your incredulity." There the matter ended. I never heard another word of Williams, nor of any other mysterious visitor. I had on one or two previous occasions argued with him against similar semi-delusions, and I believe if they had always been received with similar scepticism, they would not have been often repeated; but they were encouraged by the ready credulity with which they were received by many who ought to have known better. I call them semi-delusions, because, for the most part, they had their basis in his firm belief that his father and uncle had designs on his liberty. On this basis, his imagination built a fabric of romance, and when he presented it as substantive fact, and it was found to contain more or less of inconsistency, he felt his self-esteem interested in maintaining it by accumulated circumstances, which severally vanished under the touch of investigation, like Williams's location at the Turk's Head Coffee-house.

I must add, that in the expression of these differences, there was not a shadow of anger. They were discussed with freedom and calmness; with

the good temper and good feeling which never forsook him in conversations with his friends. There was an evident anxiety for acquiescence, but a quiet and gentle toleration of dissent. A personal discussion, however interesting to himself, was carried on with the same calmness as if it related to the most abstract question in metaphysics.

Indeed, one of the great charms of intercourse with him was the perfect good humour and openness to conviction with which he responded to opinions opposed to his own. I have known eminent men, who were no doubt very instructive as lecturers to people who like being lectured; which I never did; but with whom conversation was impossible. To oppose their dogmas, even to question them, was to throw their temper off its balance. When once this infirmity showed itself in any of my friends, I was always careful not to provoke a second ebullition. I submitted to the preaching, and was glad when it was over.

The result was a second trip to Switzerland. During his absence he wrote me several letters, some of which were subsequently published by Mrs. Shelley; others are still in my possession. Copies of two of these were obtained by Mr. Middleton, who has printed a portion of them. Mrs. Shelley was at that time in the habit of copying Shelley's letters, and these were among some papers accidentally left at Marlow, where they fell into unscrupulous hands. Mr. Middleton must have been aware that he had no right to print them without my consent. I might have stopped his publication by an injunction, but I did not think it worth while, more especially as the book, though abounding with errors adopted from Captain Medwin and others, is written with good feeling towards the memory of Shelley.

During his stay in Switzerland he became acquainted with Lord Byron. They made together an excursion round the Lake of Geneva, of which he sent me the detail in a diary. This diary was published by Mrs. Shelley, but without introducing the name of Lord Byron, who is throughout called "my companion." The diary was first published during Lord Byron's life; but why his name was concealed I do not know. Though the changes are not many, yet the association of the two names gives it great additional interest.

At the end of August, 1816, they returned to England, and Shelley passed the first fortnight of September with me at Marlow. July and August, 1816, had been months of perpetual rain. The first fortnight of September was a period of unbroken sunshine. The neighbourhood of Marlow abounds with beautiful walks; the river scenery is also fine. We took every day a long excursion, either on foot or on the water. He took a house there, partly, perhaps principally, for the sake of being near me. While it was being fitted and furnished, he resided at Bath.

In December, 1816, Harriet drowned herself in the Serpentine river, not, as Captain Medwin says, in a pond at the bottom of her father's

garden at Bath. Her father had not then left his house in Chapel Street, and to that house his daughter's body was carried.

On the 30th of December, 1816, Shelley married his second wife; and early in the ensuing year they took possession of their house at Marlow. It was a house with many large rooms and extensive gardens. He took it on a lease for twenty-one years, furnished it handsomely, fitted up a library in a room large enough for a ball-room, and settled himself down, as he supposed, for life. This was an agreeable year to all of us. Mr. Hogg was a frequent visitor. We had a good deal of rowing and sailing, and we took long walks in all directions. He had other visitors from time to time. Amongst them were Mr. Godwin and Mr. and Mrs. Leigh Hunt. He led a much more social life than he had done at Bishopgate; but he held no intercourse with his immediate neighbours. He said to me more than once, "I am not wretch enough to tolerate an acquaintance."

In the summer of 1817 he wrote the *Revolt of Islam*, chiefly on a seat on a high prominence in Bisham Wood, where he passed whole mornings with a blank book and a pencil. This work, when completed, was printed under the title of *Laon and Cythna*. In this poem he had carried the expression of his opinions, moral, political, and theological, beyond the bounds of discretion. The terror which, in those days of persecution of the press, the perusal of the book inspired in Mr. Ollier, the publisher, induced him to solicit the alteration of many passages which he had marked. Shelley was for some time inflexible; but Mr. Ollier's refusal to publish the poem as it was, backed by the advice of all his friends, induced him to submit to the required changes. Many leaves were cancelled, and it was finally published as *The Revolt of Islam*. Of *Laon and Cythna* only three copies had gone forth. One of these had found its way to the *Quarterly Review*, and the opportunity was readily seized of pouring out on it one of the most malignant effusions of the *odium theologicum* that ever appeared even in those days, and in that periodical.

During his residence at Marlow we often walked to London, frequently in company with Mr. Hogg. It was our usual way of going there, when not pressed for time. We went by a very pleasant route over fields, lanes, woods, and heaths to Uxbridge, and by the main road from Uxbridge to London. The total distance was thirty-two miles to Tyburn turnpike. We usually stayed two nights, and walked back on the third day. I never saw Shelley tired with these walks. Delicate and fragile as he appeared, he had great muscular strength. We took many walks in all directions from Marlow, and saw everything worth seeing within a radius of sixteen miles. This comprehended, among other notable places, Windsor Castle and Forest, Virginia Water, and the spots which were consecrated by the memories of Cromwell, Hampden, and Milton, in the Chiltern district of Buckinghamshire. We had also many pleasant excursions, rowing and sailing on the river, between Henley and Maidenhead.

Shelley, it has been seen, had two children by his first wife. These children he claimed after Harriet's death, but her family refused to give them up. They resisted the claim in Chancery, and the decree of Lord Eldon was given against him.

The grounds of Lord Eldon's decision have been misrepresented. The petition had adduced "Queen Mab," and other instances of Shelley's opinions on religion, as one of the elements of the charges against him; but the judgment ignores this element, and rests entirely upon moral conduct. It was distinctly laid down that the principles which Shelley had professed in regard to some of the most important relations of life, had been carried by him into practice; and that the practical development of those principles, not the principles themselves, had determined the judgment of the Court.

Lord Eldon intimated that his judgment was not final; but nothing would have been gained by an appeal to the House of Peers. Liberal law lords were then unknown; neither could Shelley have hoped to enlist public opinion in his favour. A Scotch marriage, contracted so early in life, might not have been esteemed a very binding tie: but the separation which so closely followed on a marriage in the Church of England, contracted two years and a half later, presented itself as the breach of a much more solemn and deliberate obligation.

It is not surprising that so many persons at the time should have supposed that the judgment had been founded, at least partly, on religious grounds. Shelley himself told me, that Lord Eldon had expressly stated that such grounds were excluded, and the judgment itself showed it. But few read the judgment. It did not appear in the newspapers, and all report of the proceedings was interdicted. Mr. Leigh Hunt accompanied Shelley to the Court of Chancery. Lord Eldon was extremely courteous; but he said blandly, and at the same time determinedly, that a report of the proceedings would be punished as a contempt of Court. The only explanation I have ever been able to give to myself of his motive for this prohibition was, that he was willing to leave the large body of fanatics among his political supporters under delusion as to the grounds of his judgment; and that it was more for his political interest to be stigmatized by Liberals as an inquisitor, than to incur in any degree the imputation of theological liberality from his own persecuting party.

Since writing the above passages I have seen, in the *Morning Post* of November 22nd, the report of a meeting of the Juridical Society, under the presidency of the present Lord Chancellor, in which a learned brother read a paper, proposing to revive the system of persecution against "blasphemous libel"; and in the course of his lecture he said — "The Court of Chancery, on the doctrine *Parens patriae*, deprived the parent of the guardianship of his children when his principles were in antagonism to religion, as in the case of the poet Shelley." The Attorney-General ob-

served on this: "With respect to the interference of the Court of Chancery in the case of Shelley's children, there was a great deal of misunderstanding. It was not because their father was an unbeliever in Christianity, but because he violated and refused to acknowledge the ordinary usages of morality." The last words are rather vague and twaddling, and I suppose are not the *ipsissima verba* of the Attorney-General. The essence and quintessence of Lord Eldon's judgment was this: "Mr. Shelley long ago published and maintained the doctrine that marriage is a contract binding only during mutual pleasure. He has carried out that doctrine in his own practice; he has done nothing to show that he does not still maintain it; and I consider such practice injurious to the best interests of society." I am not apologizing for Lord Eldon, nor vindicating his judgment. I am merely explaining it, simply under the wish that those who talk about it should know what it really was.

Some of Shelley's friends have spoken and written of Harriet as if to vindicate him it were necessary to disparage her. They might, I think, be content to rest the explanation of his conduct on the ground on which he rested it himself — that he had found in another the intellectual qualities which constituted his ideality of the partner of his life. But Harriet's untimely fate occasioned him deep agony of mind, which he felt the more because for a long time he kept the feeling to himself. I became acquainted with it in a somewhat singular manner.

I was walking with him one evening in Bisham Wood, and we had been talking, in the usual way, of our ordinary subjects, when he suddenly fell into a gloomy reverie. I tried to rouse him out of it, and made some remarks which I thought might make him laugh at his own abstraction. Suddenly he said to me, still with the same gloomy expression: "There is one thing to which I have decidedly made up my mind. I will take a great glass of ale every night." I said, laughingly, "A very good resolution, as the result of a melancholy musing." "Yes," he said; "but you do not know why I take it. I shall do it to deaden my feelings: for I see that those who drink ale have none." The next day he said to me: "You must have thought me very unreasonable yesterday evening?" I said, "I did, certainly." "Then," he said, "I will tell you what I would not tell anyone else. I was thinking of Harriet." I told him, "I had no idea of such a thing: it was so long since he had named her. I had thought he was under the influence of some baseless morbid feeling; but if ever I should see him again in such a state of mind, I would not attempt to disturb it."

There was not much comedy in Shelley's life; but his antipathy to "acquaintance" led to incidents of some drollery. Amongst the persons who called on him at Bishopsgate, was one whom he tried hard to get rid of, but who forced himself on him in every possible manner. He saw him at a distance one day, as he was walking down Egham Hill, and instantly jumped through a hedge, ran across a field, and laid himself down in a

dry ditch. Some men and women, who were haymaking in the field, ran up to see what was the matter, when he said to them, "Go away, go away: don't you see it's a bailiff?" On which they left him, and he escaped discovery.

After he had settled himself at Marlow, he was in want of a music-master to attend a lady staying in his house, and I inquired for one at Maidenhead. Having found one, I requested that he would call on Mr. Shelley. One morning Shelley rushed into my house in great trepidation, saying: "Barricade the doors; give orders that you are not at home. Here is — in the town." He passed the whole day with me, and we sat in expectation that the knocker or the bell would announce the unwelcome visitor; but the evening fell on the unfulfilled fear. He then ventured home. It turned out that the name of the music-master very nearly resembled in sound the name of the obnoxious gentleman; and when Shelley's man opened the library door and said, "Mr. —, sir," Shelley, who caught the name as that of his *Monsieur Tonson*, exclaimed, "I would just as soon see the devil!", sprang up from his chair, jumped out of the window, ran across the lawn, climbed over the garden-fence, and came round to me by a back-path: when we entrenched ourselves for a day's siege. We often laughed afterwards at the thought of what must have been his man's astonishment at seeing his master, on the announcement of the musician, disappear so instantaneously through the window, with the exclamation, "I would just as soon see the devil!" and in what way he could explain to the musician that his master was so suddenly "not at home."

Shelley, when he did laugh, laughed heartily, the more so as what he considered the perversions of comedy excited not his laughter but his indignation, although such disgusting outrages on taste and feeling as the burlesques by which the stage is now disgraced had not then been perpetrated. The ludicrous, when it neither offended good feeling, nor perverted moral judgment, necessarily presented itself to him with greater force.

Though his published writings are all serious, yet his letters are not without occasional touches of humour. In one which he wrote to me from Italy, he gave an account of a new acquaintance who had a prodigious nose. "His nose is something quite Slawkenbergian. It weighs on the imagination to look at it. It is that sort of nose that transforms all the g's its wearer utters into k's. It is a nose once seen never to be forgotten, and which requires the utmost stretch of Christian charity to forgive. I, you know, have a little turn-up nose, H—— has a large hook one; but add them together, square them, cube them, you would have but a faint notion of the nose to which I refer."

I may observe incidentally, that his account of his own nose corroborates the opinion I have previously expressed of the inadequate likeness of

the published portraits of him, in which the nose has no turn-up. It had, in fact, very little; just as much as may be seen in the portrait to which I have referred, in the Florentine Gallery.

The principal employment of the female population in Marlow was lace-making, miserably remunerated. He went continually amongst this unfortunate population, and to the extent of his ability relieved the most pressing cases of distress. He had a list of pensioners, to whom he made a weekly allowance.

Early in 1818 the spirit of restlessness again came over him. He left Marlow, and, after a short stay in London, left England in March of that year, never to return.

I saw him for the last time, on Tuesday the 10th of March. The evening was a remarkable one, as being that of the first performance of an opera of Rossini in England, and of the first appearance here of Malibran's father, Garcia. He performed Count Almaviva in the *Barbiere di Siviglia*. Fodor was Rosina; Naldi, Figaro; Ambrogetti, Bartolo; and Angrisani, Basilio. I supped with Shelley and his travelling companions after the opera. They departed early the next morning.

Thus two very dissimilar events form one epoch in my memory. In looking back to that long-past time, I call to mind how many friends, Shelley himself included, I saw around me in the old Italian Theatre, who have now all disappeared from the scene. I hope I am not unduly given to be *laudator temporis acti*, yet I cannot but think that the whole arrangement of the opera in England has changed for the worse. Two acts of opera, a divertissement, and a ballet, seem very ill replaced by four or five acts of opera, with little or no dancing. These, to me, verify the old saying, that "Too much of one thing is good for nothing"; and the quiet and decorous audiences, of whom Shelley used to say, "It is delightful to see human beings so civilized," are not agreeably succeeded by the vociferous assemblies, calling and recalling performers to the footlights, and showering down bouquets to the accompaniment of their noisy approbation.

At the time of his going abroad, he had two children by his second wife — William and Clara; and it has been said that the fear of having these taken from him by a decree of the Chancellor had some influence on his determination to leave England; but there was no ground for such a fear. No one could be interested in taking them from him; no reason could be alleged for taking them from their mother; the Chancellor would not have entertained the question, unless a provision had been secured for the children; and who was to do this? Restlessness and embarrassment were the causes of his determination; and according to the Newtonian doctrine, it is needless to look for more causes than are necessary to explain the phenomena.

These children both died in Italy; Clara, the youngest, in 1818, William,

in the following year. The last event he communicated to me in a few lines, dated Rome, June 8th, 1819: —

“Yesterday, after an illness of only a few days, my little William died. There was no hope from the moment of the attack. You will be kind enough to tell all my friends so that I need not write to them. It is a great exertion to me to write this, and it seems to me as if, hunted by calamity as I have been, that I should never recover any cheerfulness again.”

A little later in the same month he wrote to me again from Livorno: —

“Our melancholy journey finishes at this town; but we retrace our steps to Florence, where, as I imagine, we shall remain some months. O that I could return to England! How heavy a weight when misfortune is added to exile; and solitude, as if the measure were not full, heaped high on both. O that I could return to England! I hear you say, ‘Desire never fails to generate capacity.’ Ah! but that ever-present Malthus, necessity, has convinced desire, that even though it generated capacity its offspring must starve.”

Again from Livorno; August, 1819 (they had changed their design of going to Florence): —

“I most devoutly wish that I were living near London. I don’t think that I shall settle so far off as Richmond, and to inhabit any intermediate spot on the Thames, would be to expose myself to the river damps. Not to mention that it is not much to my taste. My inclinations point to Hampstead; but I don’t know whether I should not make up my mind to something more completely suburban. What are mountains, trees, heaths, or even the glorious and ever-beautiful sky, with such sunsets as I have seen at Hampstead, to friends? Social enjoyment in some form or other is the Alpha and Omega of existence. All that I see in Italy, and from my tower window I now see the magnificent peaks of the Apennine, half enclosing the plain, is nothing — it dwindles to smoke in the mind, when I think of some familiar forms of scenery, little perhaps in themselves, over which old remembrances have thrown a delightful colour. How we prize what we despised when present! So the ghosts of our dead associations rise and haunt us, in revenge for our having let them starve and abandoned them to perish.”

This seems to contrast strangely with a passage in Mrs. Shelley’s journal, written after her return to England: —

“Mine own Shelley! What a horror you had of returning to this miserable country! To be here without you is to be doubly exiled; to be away from Italy is to lose you twice.” — *Shelley Memorials*, p. 224.

It is probable, however, that as Mrs. Shelley was fond of Italy, he did not wish to disturb her enjoyment of it, by letting her see fully the deep-seated wish to return to his own country, which lay at the bottom of all his feelings.

It is probable also that, after the birth of his last child, he became more reconciled to residing abroad.

In the same year, the parents received the best consolation which nature could bestow on them, in the birth of another son, the present Sir Percy, who was born at Florence, on the 12th of November, 1819.

Shelley's life in Italy is best traced by his letters. He delighted in the grand aspects of nature; mountains, torrents, forests, and the sea; and in the ruins, which still reflected the greatness of antiquity. He described these scenes with extraordinary power of language, in his letters as well as in his poetry; but in the latter he peopled them with phantoms of virtue and beauty, such as never existed on earth. One of his most striking works in this kind is the "Prometheus Unbound." He only once descended into the arena of reality, and that was in the tragedy of the Cenci. This is unquestionably a work of great dramatic power, but it is as unquestionably not a work for the modern English stage. It would have been a great work in the days of Massinger. He sent it to me to introduce it to Covent Garden Theatre. I did so; but the result was as I expected. It could not be received; though great admiration was expressed of the author's powers, and great hopes of his success with a less repulsive subject. But he could not clip his wings to the littleness of the acting drama; and though he adhered to his purpose of writing for the stage, and chose Charles I for his subject, he did not make much progress in the task. If his life had been prolonged, I still think he would have accomplished something worthy of the best days of theatrical literature. If the gorgeous scenery of his poetry could have been peopled from actual life, if the deep thoughts and strong feelings which he was so capable of expressing, had been accommodated to characters such as have been and may be, however exceptional in the greatness of passion, he would have added his own name to those of the masters of the art. He studied it with unwearied devotion in its higher forms; the Greek tragedians, Shakspeare, and Calderon. Of Calderon, he says, in a letter to me from Leghorn, September 21st, 1819:—

"C. C. is now with us on his way to Vienna. He has spent a year or more in Spain, where he has learnt Spanish; and I make him read Spanish all day long. It is a most powerful and expressive language, and I have already learnt sufficient to read with great ease their poet Calderon. I have read about twelve of his plays. Some of them certainly deserve to be ranked among the grandest and most perfect productions of the human mind. He excels all modern dramatists, with the exception of Shakspeare, whom he resembles, however, in the depth of thought and subtlety of

imagination of his writings, and in the one rare power of interweaving delicate and powerful comic traits with the most tragic situations, without diminishing their interest. I rank him far above Beaumont and Fletcher."

In a letter to Mr. Gisborne dated November, 1820, he says: "I am bathing myself in the light and odour of the flowery and starry *Autos*. I have read them all more than once." These were Calderon's religious dramas, being of the same class as those which were called *Mysteries* in France and England, but of a far higher order of poetry than the latter ever attained.

The first time Mr. Trelawny saw him, he had a volume of Calderon in his hand. He was translating some passages of the "*Magico Prodigioso*."

"I arrived late, and hastened to the Tre Palazzi, on the Lung' Arno, where the Shelleys and Williamses lived on different flats under the same roof, as is the custom on the Continent. The Williamses received me in their earnest, cordial manner; we had a great deal to communicate to each other, and were in loud and animated conversation, when I was rather put out by observing in the passage near the open door, opposite to where I sat, a pair of glittering eyes steadily fixed on mine; it was too dark to make out whom they belonged to. With the acuteness of a woman, Mrs. Williams's eyes followed the direction of mine, and going to the door-way, she laughingly said —

" 'Come in, Shelley; it's only our friend Tre just arrived.'

"Swiftly gliding in, blushing like a girl, a tall, thin stripling held out both his hands; and although I could hardly believe, as I looked at his flushed, feminine, and artless face, that it could be the poet, I returned his warm pressure. After the ordinary greetings and courtesies he sat down and listened. I was silent from astonishment: was it possible this wild-looking, beardless boy, could be the veritable monster at war with all the world? — excommunicated by the Fathers of the Church, deprived of his civil rights by the fiat of a grim Lord Chancellor, discarded by every member of his family, and denounced by the rival sages of our literature as a founder of a Satanic school? I would not believe it; it must be a hoax. He was habited like a boy, in a black jacket and trousers, which he seemed to have outgrown, or his tailor, as is the custom, had most shamefully stinted him in his 'sizings.' Mrs. Williams saw my embarrassment, and to relieve me asked Shelley what book he had in his hand? His face brightened, and he answered briskly —

" 'Calderon's "*Magico Prodigioso* " ; I am translating some passages in it.'

" 'Oh, read it to us!'

"Shoved off from the shore of commonplace incidents that could not interest him, and fairly launched on a theme that did, he instantly be-

came oblivious of everything but the book in his hand. The masterly manner in which he analysed the genius of the author, his lucid interpretations of the story, and the ease with which he translated into our language the most subtle and imaginative passages of the Spanish poet, were marvellous, as was his command of the two languages. After this touch of his quality, I no longer doubted his identity. A dead silence ensued; looking up, I asked —

“ ‘ Where is he? ’ ”

“ Mrs. Williams said, ‘ Who? Shelley? Oh, he comes and goes like a spirit, no one knows when or where. ’ ” — *Trelawny*, pp. 19–22.

From this time Mr. Trelawny was a frequent visitor to the Shelleys, and, as will be seen, a true and indefatigable friend.

In the year 1818, Shelley renewed his acquaintance with Lord Byron, and continued in friendly intercourse with him till the time of his death. Till that time his life, from the birth of his son Percy, was passed chiefly in or near Pisa, or on the seashore between Genoa and Leghorn. It was unmarked by any remarkable events, except one or two, one of which appears to me to have been a mere disturbance of imagination. This was a story of his having been knocked down at the post office in Florence, by a man in a military cloak, who had suddenly walked up to him, saying, “ Are you the damned atheist Shelley? ” This man was not seen by any one else, nor ever afterwards seen or heard of; though a man answering the description had on the same day left Florence for Genoa, and was followed up without success.

I cannot help classing this incident with the Tanyrallt assassination, and other semi-delusions, of which I have already spoken.

Captain Medwin thinks this “ cowardly attack ” was prompted by some article in the *Quarterly Review*. The Quarterly Reviewers of that day had many sins to answer for in the way of persecution of genius, whenever it appeared in opposition to their political and theological intolerance; but they were, I am satisfied, as innocent of this “ attack ” on Shelley, as they were of the death of Keats. Keats was consumptive, and foredoomed by nature to early death. His was not the spirit “ to let itself be snuffed out by an article. ”

With the cessation of his wanderings, his beautiful descriptive letters ceased also. The fear of losing their only surviving son predominated over the love of travelling by which both parents were characterized. The last of this kind which was addressed to me was dated Rome, March 23rd, 1819. This was amongst the letters published by Mrs. Shelley. It is preceded by two from Naples — December 22nd, 1818, and January 26th, 1819. There was a third, which is alluded to in the beginning of his letter from Rome: “ I wrote to you the day before our departure from Naples. ” When I gave Mrs. Shelley the other letters, I sought in vain for this.

I found it, only a few months since, in some other papers, among which it had gone astray.

His serenity was temporarily disturbed by a calumny, which Lord Byron communicated to him. There is no clue to what it was; and I do not understand why it was spoken of at all. A mystery is a riddle, and the charity of the world will always give such a riddle the worst possible solution.

An affray in the streets of Pisa was a more serious and perilous reality. Shelley was riding outside the gates of Pisa with Lord Byron, Mr. Trelawny, and some other Englishmen, when a dragoon dashed through their party in an insolent manner. Lord Byron called him to account. A scuffle ensued, in which the dragoon knocked Shelley off his horse, wounded Captain Hay in the hand, and was dangerously wounded himself by one of Lord Byron's servants. The dragoon recovered; Lord Byron left Pisa; and so ended an affair which might have had very disastrous results.

Under present circumstances the following passage in a letter which he wrote to me from Pisa, dated March, 1820, will be read with interest: —

"I have a motto on a ring in Italian: '*Il buon tempo verrà.*' There is a tide both in public and in private affairs which awaits both men and nations.

"I have no news from Italy. We live here under a nominal tyranny, administered according to the philosophic laws of Leopold, and the mild opinions which are the fashion here. Tuscany is unlike all the other Italian States in this respect."

Shelley's last residence was a villa on the Bay of Spezzia. Of this villa Mr. Trelawny has given a view.

Amongst the new friends whom he had made to himself in Italy were Captain and Mrs. Williams. To these, both himself and Mrs. Shelley were extremely attached. Captain Williams was fond of boating, and furnished a model for a small sailing vessel, which he persisted in adopting against the protest of the Genoese builder and of their friend Captain Roberts, who superintended her construction. She was called the *Don Juan*. It took two tons of iron ballast to bring her down to her bearings, and even then she was very crank in a breeze. Mr. Trelawny dispatched her from Genoa under the charge of two steady seamen and a boy named Charles Vivian. Shelley retained the boy and sent back the two sailors. They told Mr. Trelawny that she was a ticklish boat to manage, but had sailed and worked well, and that they had cautioned the gentlemen accordingly.

It is clear from Mr. Trelawny's account of a trip he had with them, that the only good sailor on board was the boy. They contrived to jam the mainsheet and to put the tiller starboard instead of port. "If there had been a squall," he said, "we should have had to swim for it."

"Not I," said Shelley; "I should have gone down with the rest of the pigs at the bottom of the boat," meaning the iron pig-ballast.

In the meantime, at the instance of Shelley, Lord Byron had concurred in inviting Mr. Leigh Hunt and his family to Italy. They were to co-operate in a new quarterly journal, to which it was expected that the name of Byron would ensure an immediate and extensive circulation. This was the unfortunate *Liberal*, a title furnished by Lord Byron, of which four numbers were subsequently published. It proved a signal failure, for which there were many causes; but I do not think that any name or names could have buoyed it up against the dead weight of its title alone. A literary periodical should have a neutral name, and leave its character to be developed in its progress. A journal might be pre-eminently, on one side or the other, either aristocratical or democratical in its tone; but to call it the "Aristocrat" or the "Democrat" would be fatal to it.

Leigh Hunt arrived in Italy with his family on the 14th of June, 1822, in time to see his friend once and no more.

Shelley was at that time writing a poem called the "Triumph of Life." The composition of this poem, the perpetual presence of the sea, and other causes (among which I do not concur with Lady Shelley in placing the solitude of his seaside residence, for his life there was less solitary than it had almost ever been),

"contributed to plunge the mind of Shelley into a state of morbid excitement, the result of which was a tendency to see visions. One night loud cries were heard issuing from the saloon. The Williamses rushed out of their room in alarm; Mrs. Shelley also endeavoured to reach the spot, but fainted at the door. Entering the saloon, the Williamses found Shelley staring horribly into the air, and evidently in a trance. They waked him, and he related that a figure wrapped in a mantle came to his bedside and beckoned him. He must then have risen in his sleep, for he followed the imaginary figure into the saloon, when it lifted the hood of its mantle, ejaculated 'Siete sodisfatto?' and vanished. The dream is said to have been suggested by an incident occurring in a drama attributed to Calderon."

Another vision appeared to Shelley on the evening of May 6th, when he and Williams were walking together on the terrace. The story is thus recorded by the latter in his diary: —

"Fine. Some heavy drops of rain fell without a cloud being visible. After tea, while walking with Shelley on the terrace, and observing the effect of moonshine on the waters, he complained of being unusually nervous, and, stopping short, he grasped me violently by the arm, and stared steadfastly on the white surf that broke upon the beach under our feet. Observing himself sensibly affected, I demanded of him if he was in pain; but he only answered by saying 'There it is again; there!' He recovered after some time, and declared that he saw, as plainly as he then saw me, a naked child (Allegra, who had recently died) rise from the sea, and clasp its hands

as if in joy, smiling at him. This was a trance that it required some reasoning and philosophy entirely to wake him from, so forcibly had the vision operated on his mind. Our conversation, which had been at first rather melancholy, led to this, and my confirming his sensations by confessing that I had felt the same, gave greater activity to his ever-wandering and lively imagination." — *Shelley Memorials*, pp. 191-3.

On the afternoon of the 8th of July, 1822, after an absence of some days from home, Shelley and Williams set sail from Leghorn for their home on the Gulf of Spezzia. Trelawny watched them from Lord Byron's vessel, the *Bolívar*. The day was hot and calm. Trelawny said to his Genoese mate, "They will soon have the land breeze." "Maybe," said the mate, "they will soon have too much breeze. That gaff-topsail is foolish, in a boat with no deck and no sailor on board. Look at those black lines, and the dirty rags hanging under them out of the sky. Look at the smoke on the water. The devil is brewing mischief." Shelley's boat disappeared in a fog.

"Although the sun was obscured by mists, it was oppressively sultry. There was not a breath of air in the harbour. The heaviness of the atmosphere, and an unwonted stillness benumbed my senses. I went down into the cabin and sank into a slumber. I was roused up by a noise overhead and went on deck. The men were getting up a chain cable to let go another anchor. There was a general stir amongst the shipping; shifting berths, getting down yards and masts, veering out cables, hauling in of hawsers, letting go anchors, hailing from the ships and quays, boats scudding rapidly to and fro. It was almost dark, although only half past six o'clock. The sea was of the colour, and looked as solid and smooth as a sheet of lead, and covered with an oily scum. Gusts of wind swept over without ruffling it, and big drops of rain fell on its surface, rebounding, as if they could not penetrate it. There was a commotion in the air, made up of many threatening sounds, coming upon us from the sea. Fishing-craft and coasting vessels under bare poles rushed by us in shoals, running foul of the ships in the harbour. As yet the din and hubbub was that made by men, but their shrill pipings were suddenly silenced by the crashing voice of a thunder-squall that burst right over our heads. For some time no other sounds were to be heard than the thunder, wind and rain. When the fury of the storm, which did not last for more than twenty minutes, had abated, and the horizon was in some degree cleared, I looked to seaward anxiously, in the hope of descrying Shelley's boat amongst the many small craft scattered about. I watched every speck that loomed on the horizon, thinking that they would have borne up on their return to the port, as all the other boats that had gone out in the same direction had done." — *Trelawny*, pp. 116-18.

Mrs. Shelley and Mrs. Williams passed some days in dreadful suspense. Mrs. Shelley, unable to endure it longer, proceeded to Pisa, and rushing into Lord Byron's room with a face of marble, asked passionately, "Where is my husband?" Lord Byron afterwards said he had never seen anything in dramatic tragedy to equal the terror of Mrs. Shelley's appearance on that day.

At length the worst was known. The bodies of the two friends and the boy were washed on shore. That of the boy was buried in the sand. That of Captain Williams was burned on the 15th of August. The ashes were collected and sent to England for interment. The next day the same ceremony was performed for Shelley; and his remains were collected to be interred, as they subsequently were, in the Protestant cemetery at Rome. Lord Byron and Mr. Leigh Hunt were present on both occasions. Mr. Trelawny conducted all the proceedings, as he had conducted all the previous search. Herein, and in the whole of his subsequent conduct towards Mrs. Shelley, he proved himself, as I have already observed, a true and indefatigable friend. In a letter which she wrote to me, dated Genoa, Sept. 29th, 1822, she said: —

"Trelawny is the only quite disinterested friend I have here; the only one who clings to the memory of my loved ones as I do myself; but he, alas! is not one of them, though he is really kind and good."

The boat was subsequently recovered; the state in which everything was found in her, showed that she had not capsized. Captain Roberts first thought that she had been swamped by a heavy sea; but on closer examination, finding many of the timbers on the starboard quarter broken, he thought it certain that she must have been run down by a felucca in the squall.

I think the first conjecture the most probable. Her masts were gone, and her bowsprit broken. Mr. Trelawny had previously dispatched two large feluccas with ground-tackling to drag for her. This was done for five or six days. They succeeded in finding her, but failed in getting her up. The task was accomplished by Captain Roberts. The specified damage to such a fragile craft was more likely to have been done by the dredging apparatus, than by collision with a felucca.

So perished Percy Bysshe Shelley, in the flower of his age, and not perhaps even yet in the full flower of his genius; a genius unsurpassed in the description and imagination of scenes of beauty and grandeur; in the expression of impassioned love of ideal beauty; in the illustration of deep feeling by congenial imagery; and in the infinite variety of harmonious versification. What was, in my opinion, deficient in his poetry, was, as I have already said, the want of reality in the characters with which he peopled his splendid scenes, and to which he addressed or imparted the

utterance of his impassioned feelings. He was advancing, I think, to the attainment of this reality. It would have given to his poetry the only element of truth which it wanted; though at the same time, the more clear development of what men were would have lowered his estimate of what they might be, and dimmed his enthusiastic prospect of the future destiny of the world. I can conceive him, if he had lived to the present time, passing his days like Volney, looking on the world from his windows without taking part in its turmoils; and perhaps like the same, or some other great apostle of liberty (for I cannot at this moment verify the quotation), desiring that nothing should be inscribed on his tomb, but his name, the dates of his birth and death, and the single word,

“DÉSILLUSIONNÉ.”

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

1850-1894

By EDMUND GOSSE¹ (1849-1928)



IN setting down my recollections of Louis Stevenson, I desire to confine the record to what I have myself known and seen. His writings will be mentioned only in so far as I heard them planned and discussed. Of his career and character I shall not attempt to give a complete outline; all I purpose to do is to present those sides of them which came under my personal notice. The larger portrait it will be his privilege to prepare who was the closest and the most responsible of all Stevenson's friends; and it is only while we wait for Mr. Sidney Colvin's biography that these imperfect sketches can retain their value. The most that can be hoped for them is that they may secure a niche in his gallery. And now, pen in hand, I pause to think how I can render in words a faint impression of the most inspiring, the most fascinating human being that I have known.

I

It is nearly a quarter of a century since I first saw Stevenson. In the autumn of 1870, in company with a former schoolfellow, I was in the Hebrides. We had been wandering in the Long Island, as they name the outer archipelago, and our steamer, returning, called at Skye. At the pier of Portree, I think, a company came on board — "people of importance in their day," Edinburgh acquaintances, I suppose, who had accidentally met in Skye on various errands. At all events, they invaded our modest vessel with a loud sound of talk. Professor Blackie was among them, a famous figure that calls for no description; and a voluble, shaggy man, clad in homespun, with spectacles forward upon nose, who, it was whispered to us, was Mr. Sam Bough, the Scottish Academician, a water-colour painter of some repute, who was to die in 1878. There were also several engineers of prominence. At the tail of this chatty, jesting little crowd of invaders came a youth of about my own age, whose appearance, for some mysterious reason, instantly attracted me. He was tall, preternaturally lean, with longish hair, and as restless and questing as a spaniel.

¹ *Robert Louis Stevenson, Personal Memories*, is here reprinted from *Critical Kitts*, New York and London, 1896, by permission of Sir Edmund Gosse, and the English and American publishers, Messrs. William Heinemann, Ltd., and Dodd, Mead & Co.

The party from Portree fairly took possession of us; at meals they crowded around the captain, and we common tourists sat silent, below the salt. The stories of Blackie and Sam Bough were resonant. Meanwhile, I knew not why, I watched the plain, pale lad who took the lowest place in this privileged company.

The summer of 1870 remains in the memory of western Scotland as one of incomparable splendour. Our voyage, especially as evening drew on, was like an emperor's progress. We stayed on deck till the latest moment possible, and I occasionally watched the lean youth, busy and serviceable, with some of the little tricks with which we were later on to grow familiar — the advance with hand on hip, the sidewise bending of the head to listen. Meanwhile darkness overtook us, a wonderful halo of moonlight swam up over Glenelg, the indigo of the peaks of the Cuchullins faded into the general blue night. I went below, but was presently aware of some change of course, and then of an unexpected stoppage. I tore on deck, and found that we had left our track among the islands, and had steamed up a narrow and unvisited fiord of the mainland — I think Loch Nevis. The sight was curious and bewildering. We lay in a gorge of blackness, with only a strip of the blue moonlit sky overhead; in the dark a few lanterns jumped about the shore, carried by agitated but unseen and soundless persons. As I leaned over the bulwarks, Stevenson was at my side, and he explained to me that we had come up this loch to take away to Glasgow a large party of emigrants driven from their homes in the interests of a deer-forest. As he spoke, a black mass became visible entering the vessel. Then, as we slipped off shore, the fact of their hopeless exile came home to these poor fugitives, and suddenly, through the absolute silence, there arose from them a wild kerning and wailing, reverberated by the cliffs of the loch, and at that strange place and hour infinitely poignant. When I came on deck next morning, my unnamed friend was gone. He had put off with the engineers to visit some remote lighthouse of the Hebrides.

This early glimpse of Stevenson is a delightful memory to me. When we met next, not only did I instantly recall him, but, what was stranger, he remembered me. This voyage in the *Clansman* was often mentioned between us, and it has received for me a sort of consecration from the fact that in the very last letter that Louis wrote, finished on the day of his death, he made a reference to it.

II

In the very touching "Recollections" which our friend Mr. Andrew Lang has published, he says: "I shall not deny that my first impression [of Stevenson] was not wholly favourable." I remember, too, that John Addington Symonds was not pleased at first. It only shows how different are our moods. I must confess that in my case the invading army simply

walked up and took the fort by storm. It was in 1877, or late in 1876, that I was presented to Stevenson, at the old Savile Club, by Mr. Sidney Colvin, who thereupon left us to our devices. We went downstairs and lunched together, and then we adjourned to the smoking-room. As twilight came on I tore myself away, but Stevenson walked with me across Hyde Park, and nearly to my house. He had an engagement, and so had I, but I walked a mile or two back with him. The fountains of talk had been unsealed, and they drowned the conventions. I came home dazzled with my new friend, saying, as Constance does of Arthur, "Was ever such a gracious creature born?" That impression of ineffable mental charm was formed at the first moment of acquaintance, and it never lessened or became modified. Stevenson's rapidity in the sympathetic interchange of ideas was, doubtless, the source of it. He has been described as an "egotist," but I challenge the description. If ever there was an altruist, it was Louis Stevenson; he seemed to feign an interest in himself merely to stimulate you to be liberal in your confidences.²

Those who have written about him from later impressions than those of which I speak seem to me to give insufficient prominence to the gaiety of Stevenson. It was his cardinal quality in those early days. A childlike mirth leaped and danced in him; he seemed to skip upon the hills of life. He was simply bubbling with quips and jests; his inherent earnestness or passion about abstract things was incessantly relieved by jocosity; and when he had built one of his intellectual castles in the sand, a wave of humour was certain to sweep in and destroy it. I cannot, for the life of me, recall any of his jokes; and written down in cold blood, they might not be funny if I did. They were not wit so much as humanity, the many-sided outlook upon life. I am anxious that his laughter-loving mood should not be forgotten, because later on it was partly, but I think never wholly, quenched by ill health, responsibility, and the advance of years. He was often, in the old days, excessively and delightfully silly — silly with the silliness of an inspired schoolboy; and I am afraid that our laughter sometimes sounded ill in the ears of age.

A pathos was given to his gaiety by the fragility of his health. He was never well, all the years I knew him; and we looked upon his life as hanging by the frailest tenure. As he never complained or maundered, this, no doubt — though we were not aware of it — added to the charm of his presence. He was so bright and keen and witty, and any week he might die. No one, certainly, conceived it possible that he could reach his forty-fifth year. In 1879 his health visibly began to run lower, and he used to

² This continued to be his characteristic to the last. Thus he described an interview he had in Sydney with some man formerly connected with the "black-birding" trade, by saying: "He was very shy at first, and it was not till I told him of a good many of my escapades that I could get him to thaw, and then he poured it all out. I have always found that the best way of getting people to be confidential."

bury himself in lonely Scotch and French places, "tinkering himself with solitude," as he used to say.

My experience of Stevenson during these first years was confined to London, upon which he would make sudden piratical descents, staying a few days or weeks, and melting into air again. He was much at my house; and it must be told that my wife and I, as young married people, had possessed ourselves of a house too large for our slender means immediately to furnish. The one person who thoroughly approved of our great, bare, absurd drawing-room was Louis, who very earnestly dealt with us on the immorality of chairs and tables, and desired us to sit always, as he delighted to sit, upon hassocks on the floor. Nevertheless, as arm-chairs and settees straggled into existence, he handsomely consented to use them, although never in the usual way, but with his legs thrown sidewise over the arms of them, or the head of the sofa treated as a perch. In particular, a certain shelf, with cupboards below, attached to a bookcase, is worn with the person of Stevenson, who would spend half an evening while passionately discussing some great question of morality or literature, leaping sidewise in a seated posture to the length of this shelf, and then back again. He was eminently peripatetic, too; and never better company than walking in the street, this exercise seeming to inflame his fancy. But his most habitual dwelling-place in the London of those days was the Savile Club, then lodged in an inconvenient but very friendly house in Savile Row. Louis pervaded the club; he was its most affable and chatty member; and he lifted it, by the ingenuity of his incessant dialectic, to the level of a sort of humorous Academe or Mouseion.

At this time he must not be thought of as a successful author. A very few of us were convinced of his genius; but with the exception of Mr. Leslie Stephen, nobody of editorial status was sure of it. I remember the publication of *An Inland Voyage* in 1878, and the inability of the critics and the public to see anything unusual in it.

Stevenson was not without a good deal of innocent oddity in his dress. When I try to conjure up his figure, I can see only a slight, lean lad, in a suit of blue sea-cloth, a black shirt, and a wisp of yellow carpet that did duty for a necktie. This was long his attire, persevered in to the anguish of his more conventional acquaintances. I have a ludicrous memory of going, in 1878, to buy him a new hat, in company with Mr. Lang, the thing then upon his head having lost the semblance of a human article of dress. Aided by a very civil shopman, we suggested several hats and caps, and Louis at first seemed interested; but having presently hit upon one which appeared to us pleasing and decorous, we turned for a moment to inquire the price. We turned back, and found that Louis had fled, the idea of parting with the shapeless object having proved too painful to be entertained. By the way, Mr. Lang will pardon me if I tell, in exacter detail, a story of his. It was immediately after the adventure with the hat that,

not having quite enough money to take him from London to Edinburgh, third class, he proposed to the railway clerk to throw in a copy of Mr. Swinburne's *Queen-Mother and Rosamond*. The offer was refused with scorn, although the book was of the first edition, and even then worth more than the cost of a whole ticket.

Stevenson's pity was a very marked quality, and it extended to beggars, which is, I think, to go too far. His optimism, however, suffered a rude shock in South Audley Street one summer afternoon. We met a stalwart beggar, whom I refused to aid. Louis, however, wavered, and finally handed him sixpence. The man pocketed the coin, forbore to thank his benefactor, but, fixing his eye on me, said, in a loud voice, "And what is the other little gentleman going to give me?" "In future," said Louis, as we strode coldly on, "I shall be 'the other little gentleman.'"

In those early days he suffered many indignities on account of his extreme youthfulness of appearance and absence of self-assertion. He was at Inverness — being five or six and twenty at the time — and had taken a room in a hotel. Coming back about dinner-time, he asked the hour of the table d'hôte, whereupon the landlady said, in a motherly way: "Oh, I knew you wouldn't like to sit in there among the grown-up people, so I've had a place put for you in the bar." There was a frolic at the Royal Hotel, Bathgate, in the summer of 1879. Louis was lunching alone, and the maid, considering him a negligible quantity, came and leaned out of the window. This outrage on the proprieties was so stinging that Louis at length made free to ask her, with irony, what she was doing there. "I'm looking for my lad," she replied. "Is that he?" asked Stevenson, with keener sarcasm. "Weel, I've been lookin' for him a' my life, and I've never seen him yet," was the response. Louis was disarmed at once, and wrote her on the spot some beautiful verses in the vernacular. "They're no bad for a beginner," she was kind enough to say when she had read them.

The year 1879 was a dark one in the life of Louis. He had formed a conviction that it was his duty to go out to the extreme west of the United States, while his family and the inner circle of his friends were equally certain that it was neither needful nor expedient that he should make this journey. As it turned out, they were wrong, and he was right; but in the circumstances their opinion seemed the only correct one. His health was particularly bad, and he was ordered, not West, but South. The expedition, which he has partly described in *The Amateur Emigrant* and *Across the Plains*, was taken, therefore, in violent opposition to all those whom he left in England and Scotland; and this accounts for the mode in which it was taken. He did not choose to ask for money to be spent in going to California, and it was hoped that the withdrawal of supplies would make the voyage impossible. But Louis, bringing to the front a streak of iron obstinacy which lay hidden somewhere in his gentle nature, scraped together enough to secure him a steerage passage across the Atlantic.

The day before he started he spent with my wife and me — a day of stormy agitation, an April day of rainclouds and sunshine; for it was not in Louis to remain long in any mood. I seem to see him now, pacing the room, a cigarette spinning in his wasted fingers. To the last we were trying to dissuade him from what seemed to us the maddest of enterprises. He was so ill that I did not like to leave him, and at night — it was midsummer weather — we walked down into town together. We were by this time, I suppose, in a pretty hysterical state of mind, and as we went through Berkeley Square, in mournful discussion of the future, Louis suddenly proposed that we should visit the so-called "Haunted House," which then occupied the newspapers. The square was quiet in the decency of a Sunday evening. We found the house, and one of us boldly knocked at the door. There was no answer and no sound, and we jeered upon the door-step; but suddenly we were both aware of a pale face — a phantasm in the dusk — gazing down upon us from a surprising height. It was the caretaker, I suppose, mounted upon a flight of steps: but terror gripped us at the heart, and we fled with footsteps as precipitate as those of schoolboys caught in an orchard. I think that ghostly face in Berkeley Square must have been Louis's latest European impression for many months.

III

All the world now knows, through the two books which I have named, what immediately happened. Presently letters began to arrive, and in one from Monterey, written early in October 1879, he told me of what was probably the nearest approach of death that ever came until the end, fifteen years later. I do not think it is generally known, even in the inner circle of his friends, that in September of that year he was violently ill, alone, at an Angora-goat ranch in the Santa Lucia Mountains. "I scarcely slept or ate or thought for four days," he said. "Two nights I lay out under a tree, in a sort of stupor, doing nothing but fetch water for myself and horse, light a fire and make coffee, and all night awake hearing the goat-bells ringing and the tree-toads singing, when each new noise was enough to set me mad." Then an old frontiersman, a mighty hunter of bears, came round, and tenderly nursed him through his attack. "By all rule this should have been my death; but after a while my spirit got up again in a divine frenzy, and has since kicked and spurred my vile body forward with great emphasis and success."

Late in the winter of 1879, with renewed happiness and calm of life, and also under the spur of a need of money, he wrote with much assiduity. Among other things, he composed at Monterey the earliest of his novels, a book called *A Vendetta in the West*, the manuscript of which seems to have disappeared. Perhaps we need not regret it; for, so he declared to me, "It was about as bad as Ouida, but not quite, for it was not so eloquent." He

had made a great mystery of his whereabouts; indeed, for several months no one was to know what had become of him, and his letters were to be considered secret. At length, in writing from Monterey, on November 15, 1879, he removed the embargo: "That I am in California may now be published to the brethren." In the summer of the next year, after a winter of very serious ill health, during which more than once he seemed on the brink of a galloping consumption, he returned to England. He had married in California a charming lady whom we all soon learned to regard as the most appropriate and helpful companion that Louis could possibly have secured. On October 8, 1880—a memorable day—he made his first appearance in London since his American exile. A postcard from Edinburgh had summoned me to "appoint with an appointment" certain particular friends; "and let us once again," Louis wrote, "lunch together in the Savile Halls." Mr. Lang and Mrs. Walter Pollock, and, I think, Mr. Henley, graced the occasion, and the club cellar produced a bottle of Chambertin of quite uncommon merit. Louis, I may explain, had a peculiar passion for Burgundy, which he esteemed the wine of highest possibilities in the whole Bacchic order; and I have often known him desecant on a Pommard or a Montrachet in terms so exquisite that the listeners could scarcely taste the wine itself.

Davos-Platz was now prescribed for the rickety lungs; and late in that year Louis and his wife took up their abode there, at the Hôtel Buol, he carrying with him a note from me recommending him to the care of John Addington Symonds. Not at first, but presently and on the whole, these two men, so singular in their generation, so unique and so unlike, "hit it off," as people say, and were an intellectual solace to each other; but their real friendship did not begin till a year later. I remember Stevenson saying to me next spring that to be much with Symonds was to "adventure in a thornwood." It was at Davos, this winter of 1880, that Stevenson took up the study of Hazlitt, having found a publisher who was willing to bring out a critical and biographical memoir. This scheme occupied a great part of Louis's attention, but was eventually dropped; for the further he progressed in the investigation of Hazlitt's character the less he liked it, and the squalid *Liber Amoris* gave the *coup de grâce*. He did not know what he would be at. His vocation was not yet apparent to him. He talked of writing on craniology and the botany of the Alps. The unwritten books of Stevenson will one day attract the scholiast, who will endeavour, perhaps, to reconstruct them from the references to them in his correspondence. It may, therefore, be permissible to record here that he was long proposing to write a life of the Duke of Wellington, for which he made some considerable collections. This was even advertised as "in preparation," on several occasions, from 1885 until 1887, but was ultimately abandoned. I remember his telling me that he intended to give emphasis to the "humour" of Wellington.

In June, 1881, we saw him again; but he passed very rapidly through London to a cottage at Pitlochry in Perthshire. He had lost his hold on town. "London," he wrote me, "now chiefly means to me Colvin and Henley, Leslie Stephen and you." He was now coursing a fresh literary hare, and set Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. Saintsbury, and me busily hunting out facts about Jean Cavalier, the romantic eighteenth-century adventurer, whose life he fancied that he would write. His thoughts had recurred, in fact, to Scottish history; and he suddenly determined to do what seemed rather a mad thing — namely, to stand for the Edinburgh professorship of history, then just vacant. We were all whipped up for testimonials, and a little pamphlet exists, in a pearl-grey cover — the despair of bibliophiles — in which he and a strange assortment of his friends set forth his claims. These required nimble treatment, since, to put it plainly, it was impossible to say that he had any. His appeal was treated by the advocates, who were the electing body, with scant consideration, and some worthy gentleman was elected. The round Louis was well out of such a square hole as a chair in a university.

But something better was at hand. It was now, and in the peace of the Highlands, that Louis set out to become a popular writer. The fine art of "booming" had not then been introduced, nor the race of those who week by week discover coveys of fresh geniuses. Although Stevenson, in a sporadic way, had written much that was delightful, and that will last, he was yet — now at the close of his thirty-first year — by no means successful. The income he made by his pen was still ridiculously small; and Mr. John Morley, amazing as it sounds today, had just refused to give him a book to write in the *English Men of Letters* series, on the ground of his obscurity as an author. All this was to be changed, and the book that was to do it was even now upon the stocks. In August the Stevensons moved to a house in Braemar — a place, as Louis said, "patronized by the royalty of the Sister Kingdoms — Victoria and the Cairngorms, sir, honouring that country-side by their conjunct presence." Hither I was invited, and here I paid an ever-memorable visit. The house, as Louis was careful to instruct me, was entitled "The Cottage, late the late Miss McGregor's, Castleton of Braemar"; and thus I obediently addressed my letters until Louis remarked that "the reference to a deceased Highland lady, tending as it does to foster unavailing sorrow, may be with advantage omitted from the address."

To the Cottage, therefore, heedless of the names of the late Miss McGregor, I proceeded in the most violent storm of hail and rain that even Aberdeenshire can produce in August, and found Louis as frail as a ghost, indeed, but better than I expected. He had adopted a trick of stretching his thin limbs over the back of a wicker sofa, which gave him an extraordinary resemblance to that quaint insect, the praying mantis; but it was a mercy to find him out of bed at all. Among the many attractions of the

Cottage, the presence of Mr. Thomas Stevenson — Louis's father — must not be omitted. He was then a singularly charming and vigorous personality, indignantly hovering at the borders of old age ("Sixty-three, sir, this year; and, deuce take it! am I to be called 'an old gentleman' by a cab-driver in the streets of Aberdeen?") and, to my gratitude and delight, my companion in long morning walks. The detestable weather presently brought all the other members of the household to their beds, and Louis in particular became a wreck. However, it was a wreck that floated every day at nightfall; for at the worst he was able to come downstairs to dinner and spend the evening with us.

We passed the days with regularity. After breakfast I went to Louis's bedroom, where he sat up in bed, with dark, flashing eyes and ruffled hair, and we played chess on the coverlet. Not a word passed, for he was strictly forbidden to speak in the early part of the day. As soon as he felt tired — often in the middle of a game — he would rap with peremptory knuckles on the board as a signal to stop, and then Mrs. Stevenson or I would arrange his writing materials on the bed. Then I would see no more of him till dinner-time, when he would appear, smiling and voluble, the horrid bar of speechlessness having been let down. Then every night, after dinner, he would read us what he had written during the day. I find in a note to my wife, dated September 3, 1881: "Louis has been writing, all the time I have been here, a novel of pirates and hidden treasure, in the highest degree exciting. He reads it to us every night, chapter by chapter." This, of course, was *Treasure Island*, about the composition of which, long afterwards, in Samoa, he wrote an account in some parts of which I think that his memory played him false. I look back to no keener intellectual pleasure than those cold nights at Braemar, with the sleet howling outside, and Louis reading his budding romance by the lamplight, emphasizing the purpler passages with lifted voice and gesticulating finger.

IV

Hardly had I left the Cottage than the harsh and damp climate of Aberdeenshire was felt to be rapidly destroying Louis, and he and his wife fled to Davos. Before the end of October they were ensconced there in a fairly comfortable chalet. Here Louis and his step-son amused themselves by setting up a hand-press, which Mr. Osbourne worked, and for which Louis provided the literary material. Four or five laborious little publications were put forth, some of them illustrated by the daring hand of Stevenson himself. He complained to me that Mr. Osbourne was a very ungenerous publisher — "one penny a cut, and one halfpenny a set of verses! What do you say to that for Grub Street?" These little diversions were brought to a close by the printer-publisher breaking, at one fell swoop, the press and his own finger. The little "Davos Press" issues

now fetch extravagant prices, which would have filled author and printer with amazement. About this time Louis and I have a good deal of correspondence about a work which he had proposed that we should undertake in collaboration—a retelling, in choice literary form, of the most picturesque murder cases of the last hundred years. We were to visit the scenes of these crimes, and turn over the evidence. The great thing, Louis said, was not to begin to write until we were thoroughly alarmed. "These things must be done, my boy, under the very shudder of the goose-flesh." We were to begin with the "Story of the Red Bard," which indeed is a tale pre-eminently worthy to be retold by Stevenson. But the scheme never came off, and is another of the dead leaves in his Vallombrosa.

We saw him in London again, for a few days, in October 1882; but this was a melancholy period. For eight months at the close of that year and the beginning of 1883 he was capable of no mental exertion. He was in the depths of languor, and in nightly apprehension of a fresh attack. He slept excessively, and gave humorous accounts of the drowsiness that hung upon him, addressing his notes as "from the Arms of Porpus" (Morpheus) and "at the Sign of the Poppy." No climate seemed to relieve him, and so, in the autumn of 1882, a bold experiment was tried. As the snows of Davos were of no avail, the hot, damp airs of Hyères should be essayed. I am inclined to dwell in some fulness on the year he spent at Hyères, because, curiously enough, it was not so much as mentioned, to my knowledge, by any of the writers of obituary notices at Stevenson's death. It takes, nevertheless, a prominent place in his life's history, for his removal thither marked a sudden and brilliant, though only temporary, revival in his health and spirits. Some of his best work, too, was written at Hyères, and one might say that fame first found him in this warm corner of southern France.

The house at Hyères was called "La Solitude." It stood in a paradise of roses and aloes, fig-marigolds and olives. It had delectable and even, so Louis declared, "sub-celestial" views over a plain bounded by "certain mountains as graceful as Apollo, as severe as Zeus"; and at first the hot mistral, which blew and burned where it blew, seemed the only drawback. Not a few of the best poems in the *Underwoods* reflect the ecstasy of convalescence under the skies and perfumes of La Solitude. By the summer Louis could report "good health of a radiant order." It was while he was at Hyères that Stevenson first directly addressed an American audience, and I may record that, in September 1883, he told me to "beg Gilder your prettiest for a gentleman in pecuniary sloughs." Mr. Gilder was quite alive to the importance of securing such a contributor, although when the Amateur Emigrant had entered the office of *The Century Magazine* in 1879 he had been very civilly but coldly shown the door. (I must be allowed to tease my good friends in Union Square by recording that

fact!) Mr. Gilder asked for fiction, but received instead *The Silverado Squatters*, which duly appeared in the magazine.

It was also arranged that Stevenson should make an ascent of the Rhône for *The Century*, and Mr. Joseph Pennell was to accompany him to make sketches for the magazine. But Stevenson's health failed again: the sudden death of a very dear old friend was a painful shock to him, and the winter of that year was not propitious. Abruptly, however, in January 1884, another crisis came. He went to Nice, where he was thought to be dying. He saw no letters; all his business was kindly taken charge of by Mr. Henley; and again, for a long time, he passed beneath the penumbra of steady languor and infirmity. When it is known how constantly he suffered, how brief and flickering were the intervals of comparative health, it cannot but add to the impression of his radiant fortitude through all these trials, and of his persistent employment of all lucid moments. It was pitiful, and yet at the same time very inspiring, to see a creature so feeble and so ill equipped for the struggle bear himself so smilingly and so manfully through all his afflictions. There can be no doubt, however, that this latest breakdown vitally affected his spirits. He was never, after this, quite the gay child of genius that he had previously been. Something of a graver cast became natural to his thoughts; he had seen Death in the cave. And now for the first time we traced a new note in his writings — the note of "Pulvis et Ûmbra."

After 1883 my personal memories of Stevenson become very casual. In November 1884, he was settled at Bournemouth, in a villa called Bonaltie Towers, and there he stayed until, in March 1885, he took a house of his own, which, in pious memory of his grandfather, he named Skerryvore. In the preceding winter, when I was going to America to lecture, he was particularly anxious that I should lay at the feet of Mr. Frank R. Stockton his homage, couched in the following lines:

*My Stockton if I failed to like,
It were a sheer depravity;
For I went down with the "Thomas Hyke,"
And up with the "Negative Gravity."*

He adored these tales of Mr. Stockton's, a taste which must be shared by all good men. To my constant sorrow, I was never able to go to Bournemouth during the years he lived there. It has been described to me, by those who were more fortunate, as a pleasure that was apt to tantalize and evade the visitor, so constantly was the invalid unable, at the last, to see the friend who had travelled a hundred miles to speak with him. It was therefore during his visits to London, infrequent as these were, that we saw him at his best, for these were made at moments of unusual recovery. He generally lodged at what he called the "Monument," this being his title for Mr. Colvin's house, a wing of the vast structure of the British Museum.

I recall an occasion on which Louis dined with us (March 1886), because of the startling interest in the art of strategy which he had developed — an interest which delayed the meal with arrangements of serried bottles counter-scarped and lines of cruets drawn up on horseback ready to charge. So infectious was his enthusiasm that we forgot our hunger, and hung over the embattled table-cloth, easily persuaded to agree with him that neither poetry nor the plastic arts could compete for a moment with “the finished conduct, sir, of a large body of men in face of the enemy.”

It was a little later that he took up the practice of modelling clay figures as he sat up in bed. Some of these compositions — which needed, perhaps, his eloquent commentary to convey their full effect to the spectator — were not without a measure of skill of design. I recollect his saying, with extreme gravity, “I am in sculpture what Mr. Watts is in painting. We are both of us preoccupied with moral and abstract ideas.” I wonder whether anyone has preserved specimens of these allegorical groups of clay.

The last time I had the happiness of seeing Stevenson was on Sunday, August 21, 1887. He had been brought up from Bournemouth the day before in a wretched condition of health, and was lodged in a private hotel in Finsbury Circus, in the City, ready to be easily moved to a steamer in the Thames on the morrow. I was warned, in a note, of his passage through town, and of the uncertainty whether he could be seen. On the chance, I went over early on the 21st, and, very happily for me, he had had a fair night, and could see me for an hour or two. No one else but Mrs. Stevenson was with him. His position was one which might have daunted any man’s spirit, doomed to exile, in miserable health, starting vaguely across the Atlantic, with all his domestic interests rooted up, and with no notion where, or if at all, they should be replanted. If ever a man of imagination could be excused for repining, it was now.

But Louis showed no white feather. He was radiantly humorous and romantic. It was church time, and there was some talk of my witnessing his will, which I could not do, because there could be found no other reputable witness, the whole crew of the hotel being at church. This set Louis off on a splendid dream of romance. “This,” he said, “is the way in which our valuable city hotels — packed, doubtless, with rich objects of jewellery — are deserted on a Sunday morning. Some bold piratical fellow, defying the spirit of Sabbatarianism, might make a handsome revenue by sacking the derelict hotels between the hours of ten and twelve. One hotel a week would suffice to enable such a man to retire into private life within the space of a year. A mask might, perhaps, be worn for the mere fancy of the thing, and to terrify kitchen-maids, but no real disguise would be needful to an enterprise that would require nothing but a brave heart and careful study of the City Postal Directory.” He spoke of the matter with so much fire and gallantry that I blushed for the youth of England and

its lack of manly enterprise. No one ever could describe preposterous conduct with such a convincing air as Louis could. Common sense was positively humbled in his presence.

The volume of his poems called *Underwoods* had just appeared, and he inscribed a copy of it to me in the words "at Todgers', as ever was, *chez Todgers*, Pecksniff street." The only new book he seemed to wish to carry away with him was Mr. Hardy's beautiful romance, *The Woodlanders*, which we had to scour London that Sunday afternoon to get hold of. In the evening Mr. Colvin and I each returned to "Todgers'" with the three volumes, borrowed or stolen somewhere, and wrapped up for the voyage next day. And so the following morning, in an extraordinary vessel called the *Ludgate Hill* — as though in compliment to Mr. Stockton's genius — and carrying, besides the Stevensons, a cargo of stallions and monkeys, Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson and Mr. Lloyd Osbourne steamed down the Thames in search of health across the Atlantic and the Pacific. The horses, Louis declared, protruded their noses in an unmannerly way between the passengers at dinner, and the poor little grey monkeys, giving up life for a bad job on board that strange, heaving cage, died by dozens, and were flung contemptuously out into the ocean. The strangest voyage, however, some time comes to an end, and Louis landed in America. He was never to cross the Atlantic again; and for those who loved him in Europe he had already journeyed more than half-way to another world.

V

It is impossible to deal, however lightly with the personal qualities of Robert Louis Stevenson without dwelling on the extreme beauty of his character. In looking back over the twenty years in which I knew him, I feel that, since he was eminently human, I ought to recall his faults, but I protest that I can remember none. Perhaps the nearest approach to a fault was a certain way of discretion, always founded on a wish to make people understand each other, but not exactly according to wisdom. I recollect that he once embroiled me for a moment with John Addington Symonds in a manner altogether bloodthirsty and ridiculous, so that we both fell upon him and rended him. This little weakness is really the blackest crime I can lay to his charge. And on the other side, what courage, what love, what an indomitable spirit, what a melting pity! He had none of the sordid errors of the little man who writes — no sick ambition, no envy of others, no exaggeration of the value of this ephemeral trick of scribbling. He was eager to help his fellows, ready to take a second place, with great difficulty offended, by the least show of repentance perfectly appeased.

Quite early in his career he adjusted himself to the inevitable sense of physical failure. He threw away from him all the useless impediments: he

sat loosely in the saddle of life. Many men who get such a warning as he got take up something to lean against; according to their education or temperament, they support their maimed existence on religion, or on cynical indifference, or on some mania of the collector or the *dilettante*. Stevenson did none of these things. He determined to make the sanest and most genial use of so much of life as was left him. As anyone who reads his books can see, he had a deep strain of natural religion; but he kept it to himself; he made no hysterical or ostentatious use of it.

Looking back at the past, one recalls a trait that had its significance, though one missed its meaning then. He was careful, as I have hardly known any other man to be, not to allow himself to be burdened by the weight of material things. It was quite a jest with us that he never acquired any possessions. In the midst of those who produced books, pictures, prints, bric-à-brac, none of these things ever stuck to Stevenson. There are some deep-sea creatures, the early part of whose life is spent dancing through the waters; at length some sucker or tentacle touches a rock, adheres, pulls down more tentacles, until the creature is caught there, stationary for the remainder of its existence. So it happens to men, and Stevenson's friends, one after another, caught the ground with a house, a fixed employment, a "stake in life"; he alone kept dancing in the free element, unattached. I remember his saying to me that if ever he had a garden he should like it to be empty, just a space to walk and talk in, with no flowers to need a gardener nor fine lawns that had to be mown. Just a fragment of a bare world to move in, that was all Stevenson asked for. And we who gathered possessions around us — a little library of rare books, a little gallery of drawings or bronzes — he mocked us with his goblin laughter; it was only so much more luggage to carry on the march, he said, so much more to strain the arms and bend the back.

Stevenson thought, as we all must think, that literature is a delightful profession, a primrose path. I remember his once saying so to me, and then he turned, with the brimming look in his lustrous eyes and the tremulous smile on his lips, and added, "But it is not all primroses, some of it is brambly, and most of it uphill." He knew — no one better — how the hill catches the breath and how the brambles tear the face and hands; but he pushed strenuously, serenely on, searching for new paths, struggling to get up into the light and air.

One reason why it was difficult to be certain that Stevenson had reached his utmost in any direction was what I will call, for want of a better phrase, the *energetic modesty* of his nature. He was never satisfied with himself, yet never cast down. There are two dangers that beset the artist — the one is being pleased with what he has done, and the other being dejected with it. Stevenson, more than any other man whom I have known, steered the middle course. He never conceived that he had achieved a great success, but he never lost hope that by taking pains he might yet

do so. Twelve years ago, when he was beginning to write that curious and fascinating book, *Prince Otto*, he wrote to me describing the mood in which one should go about one's work — golden words, which I have never forgotten. "One should strain," he said, "and then play, strain again, and play again. The strain is for us, it educates; the play is for the reader, and pleases. In moments of effort one learns to do the easy things that people like."

He learned that which he desired, and he gained more than he hoped for. He became the most exquisite English writer of his generation; yet those who lived close to him are apt to think less of this than of the fact that he was the most unselfish and the most lovable of human beings.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

1817-1862

By RALPH WALDO EMERSON¹ (1803-1882)



HENRY DAVID THOREAU was the last male descendant of a French ancestor who came to this country from the Isle of Guernsey. His character exhibited occasional traits drawn from this blood, in singular combination with a very strong Saxon genius.

He was born in Concord, Massachusetts, on the 12th of July, 1817. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1837, but without any literary distinction. An iconoclast in literature, he seldom thanked colleges for their service to him, holding them in small esteem, whilst yet his debt to them was important. After leaving the University, he joined his brother in teaching a private school, which he soon renounced. His father was a manufacturer of lead-pencils, and Henry applied himself for a time to this craft, believing he could make a better pencil than was then in use. After completing his experiments, he exhibited his work to chemists and artists in Boston, and having obtained their certificates to its excellence and to its equality with the best London manufacturer, he returned home contented. His friends congratulated him that he had now opened his way to fortune. But he replied, that he should never make another pencil. "Why should I? I would not do again what I have done once." He resumed his endless walks and miscellaneous studies, making every day some new acquaintance with Nature, though as yet never speaking of zoology or botany, since, though very studious of natural facts, he was incurious of technical and textual science.

At this time, a strong, healthy youth, fresh from college, whilst all his companions were choosing their profession, or eager to begin some lucrative employment, it was inevitable that his thoughts should be exercised on the same question, and it required rare decision to refuse all the accustomed paths and keep his solitary freedom at the cost of disappointing the natural expectations of his family and friends: all the more difficult that he had a perfect probity, was exact in securing his own independence, and in holding every man to the like duty. But Thoreau never faltered. He was a born protestant. He declined to give up his large ambition of knowledge and

¹ Reprinted from *Lectures and Biographical Sketches*, Boston, 1883. It was in its first form delivered as an address in 1862, and in 1863 enlarged and printed in its present form in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Boston.

action for any narrow craft or profession, aiming at a much more comprehensive calling, the art of living well. If he slighted and defied the opinions of others, it was only that he was more intent to reconcile his practice with his own belief. Never idle or self-indulgent, he preferred, when he wanted money, earning it by some piece of manual labour agreeable to him, as building a boat or a fence, planting, grafting, surveying, or other short work, to any long engagements. With his hardy habits and few wants, his skill in wood-craft, and his powerful arithmetic, he was very competent to live in any part of the world. It would cost him less time to supply his wants than another. He was therefore secure of his leisure.

A natural skill for mensuration, growing out of his mathematical knowledge and his habits of ascertaining the measures and distances of objects which interested him, the size of trees, the depth and extent of ponds and rivers, the height of mountains, and the air-line distance of his favourite summits, — this, and his intimate knowledge of the territory about Concord, made him drift into the profession of land-surveyor. It had the advantage for him that it led him continually into new and secluded grounds, and helped his studies of Nature. His accuracy and skill in this work were readily appreciated, and he found all the employment he wanted.

He could easily solve the problems of the surveyor, but he was daily beset with graver questions, which he manfully confronted. He interrogated every custom, and wished to settle all his practice on an ideal foundation. He was a protestant *à outrance*, and few lives contain so many renunciations. He was bred to no profession; he never married; he lived alone; he never went to church; he never voted; he refused to pay a tax to the State; he ate no flesh, he drank no wine, he never knew the use of tobacco; and, though a naturalist, he used neither trap nor gun. He chose, wisely no doubt for himself, to be the bachelor of thought and Nature. He had no talent for wealth, and knew how to be poor without the least hint of squalor or inelegance. Perhaps he fell into his way of living without forecasting it much, but approved it with later wisdom. "I am often reminded," he wrote in his journal, "that if I had bestowed on me the wealth of Cræsus, my aims must be still the same, and my means essentially the same." He had no temptations to fight against, — no appetites, no passions, no taste for elegant trifles. A fine house, dress, the manners and talk of highly cultivated people were all thrown away on him. He much preferred a good Indian, and considered these refinements as impediments to conversation, wishing to meet his companion on the simplest terms. He declined invitations to dinner-parties, because there each was in everyone's way, and he could not meet the individuals to any purpose. "They make their pride," he said, "in making their dinner cost much; I make my pride in making my dinner cost little." When asked at table what dish he preferred, he answered. "The nearest." He did not like the taste of wine, and never had a vice in his life. He said, — "I have a faint recollection of

pleasure derived from smoking dried lily-stems, before I was a man. I had commonly a supply of these. I have never smoked anything more noxious."

He chose to be rich by making his wants few, and supplying them himself. In his travels, he used the railroad only to get over so much country as was unimportant to the present purpose, walking hundreds of miles, avoiding taverns, buying a lodging in farmers' and fishermen's houses, as cheaper, and more agreeable to him, and because there he could better find the men and the information he wanted.

There was somewhat military in his nature, not to be subdued, always manly and able, but rarely tender, as if he did not feel himself except in opposition. He wanted a fallacy to expose, a blunder to pillory, I may say required a little sense of victory, a roll of the drum, to call his powers into full exercise. It cost him nothing to say No; indeed he found it much easier than to say Yes. It seemed as if his first instinct on hearing a proposition was to controvert it, so impatient was he of the limitations of our daily thought. This habit, of course, is a little chilling to the social affections; and though the companion would in the end acquit him of any malice or untruth, yet it mars conversation. Hence, no equal companion stood in affectionate relations with one so pure and guileless. "I love Henry," said one of his friends, "but I cannot like him; and as for taking his arm, I should as soon think of taking the arm of an elm-tree."

Yet, hermit and stoic as he was, he was really fond of sympathy, and threw himself heartily and childlike into the company of young people whom he loved, and whom he delighted to entertain, as he only could, with the varied and endless anecdotes of his experiences by field and river: he was always ready to lead a huckleberry-party or a search for chestnuts or grapes. Talking, one day, of a public discourse, Henry remarked, that whatever succeeded with the audience was bad. I said, "Who would not like to write something which all can read, like Robinson Crusoe? and who does not see with regret that his page is not solid with a right materialistic treatment, which delights everybody?" Henry objected, of course, and vaunted the better lectures which reached only a few persons. But, at supper, a young girl, understanding that he was to lecture at the Lyceum, sharply asked him, "Whether his lecture would be a nice, interesting story, such as she wished to hear, or whether it was one of those old philosophical things that she did not care about." Henry turned to her, and bethought himself, and, I saw, was trying to believe that he had matter that might fit her and her brother, who were to sit up and go to the lecture, if it was a good one for them.

He was a speaker and actor of the truth, born such, and was ever running into dramatic situations from this cause. In any circumstance it interested all bystanders to know what part Henry would take, and what he would say; and he did not disappoint expectation, but used an original

judgment on each emergency. In 1845 he built himself a small framed house on the shores of Walden Pond, and lived there two years alone, a life of labour and study. This action was quite native and fit for him. No one who knew him would tax him with affectation. He was more unlike his neighbours in his thought than in his action. As soon as he had exhausted the advantages of that solitude, he abandoned it. In 1847, not approving some uses to which the public expenditure was applied, he refused to pay his town tax, and was put in jail. A friend paid the tax for him, and he was released. The like annoyance was threatened the next year. But, as his friends paid the tax, notwithstanding his protest, I believe he ceased to resist. No opposition or ridicule had any weight with him. He coldly and fully stated his opinion without affecting to believe that it was the opinion of the company. It was of no consequence if everyone present held the opposite opinion. On one occasion he went to the University Library to procure some books. The librarian refused to lend them. Mr. Thoreau repaired to the President, who stated to him the rules and usages, which permitted the loan of books to resident graduates, to clergymen who were alumni, and to some others resident within a circle of ten miles' radius from the College. Mr. Thoreau explained to the President that the railroad had destroyed the old scale of distances, — that the library was useless, yes, and President and College useless, on the terms of his rules, — that the one benefit he owed to the College was its library, — that, at this moment, not only his want of books was imperative but he wanted a large number of books, and assured him that he, Thoreau, and not the librarian, was the proper custodian of these. In short, the President found the petitioner so formidable, and the rules getting to look so ridiculous, that he ended by giving him a privilege which in his hands proved unlimited thereafter.

No truer American existed than Thoreau. His preference of his country and condition was genuine, and his aversion from English and European manners and tastes almost reached contempt. He listened impatiently to news or *bons mots* gleaned from London circles; and though he tried to be civil, these anecdotes fatigued him. The men were all imitating each other, and on a small mould. Why can they not live as far apart as possible, and each be a man by himself? What he sought was the most energetic nature; and he wished to go to Oregon, not to London. "In every part of Great Britain," he wrote in his diary, "are discovered traces of the Romans, their funeral urns, their camps, their roads, their dwellings. But New England, at least, is not based on any Roman ruins. We have not to lay the foundations of our houses on the ashes of a former civilization."

But, idealist as he was, standing for abolition of slavery, abolition of tariffs, almost for abolition of government, it is needless to say he found himself not only unrepresented in actual politics, but almost equally opposed to every class of reformers. Yet he paid the tribute of his uniform

respect to the Anti-Slavery party. One man, whose personal acquaintance he had formed, he honoured with exceptional regard. Before the first friendly word had been spoken for Captain John Brown, he sent notices to most houses in Concord that he would speak in a public hall on the condition and character of John Brown, on Sunday evening, and invited all people to come. The Republican Committee, the Abolitionist Committee, sent him word that it was premature and not advisable. He replied, — "I did not send to you for advice, but to announce that I am to speak." The hall was filled at an early hour by people of all parties, and his earnest eulogy of the hero was heard by all respectfully, by many with a sympathy that surprised themselves.

It was said of Plotinus that he was ashamed of his body, and 't is very likely he had good reason for it, — that his body was a bad servant, and he had not skill in dealing with the material world, as happens often to men of abstract intellect. But Mr. Thoreau was equipped with a most adapted and serviceable body. He was of short stature, firmly built, of light complexion, with strong, serious blue eyes, and a grave aspect, — his face covered in the late years with a becoming beard. His senses were acute, his frame well-knit and hardy, his hands strong and skilful in the use of tools. And there was a wonderful fitness of body and mind. He could pace sixteen rods more accurately than another man could measure them with rod and chain. He could find his path in the woods at night, he said, better by his feet than his eyes. He could estimate the measure of a tree very well by his eye; he could estimate the weight of a calf or a pig, like a dealer. From a box containing a bushel or more of loose pencils, he could take up with his hands fast enough just a dozen pencils at every grasp. He was a good swimmer, runner, skater, boatman, and would probably outwalk most countrymen in a day's journey. And the relation of body to mind was still finer than we have indicated. He said he wanted every stride his legs made. The length of his walk uniformly made the length of his writing. If shut up in the house he did not write at all.

He had a strong common sense, like that which Rose Flammock the weaver's daughter in Scott's romance commends in her father, as resembling a yardstick, which, whilst it measures dowlas and diaper, can equally well measure tapestry and cloth of gold. He had always a new resource. When I was planting forest trees, and had procured half a peck of acorns, he said that only a small portion of them would be sound, and proceeded to examine them and select the sound ones. But finding this took time, he said, "I think if you put them all into water the good ones will sink"; which experiment we tried with success. He could plan a garden or a house or a barn; would have been competent to lead a "Pacific Exploring Expedition"; could give judicious counsel in the gravest private or public affairs.

He lived for the day, not cumbered and mortified by his memory. If he

brought you yesterday a new proposition, he would bring you today another not less revolutionary. A very industrious man, and setting, like all highly organized men, a high value on his time, he seemed the only man of leisure in town, always ready for an excursion that promised well, or for conversation prolonged into late hours. His trenchant sense was never stopped by his rules of daily prudence, but was always up to the new occasion. He liked and used the simplest food, yet, when someone urged a vegetable diet, Thoreau thought all diets a very small matter, saying that "the man who shoots the buffalo lives better than the man who boards at the Graham House." He said, — "You can sleep near the railroad, and never be disturbed: Nature knows very well what sounds are worth attending to, and has made up her mind not to hear the railroad-whistle. But things respect the devout mind, and a mental ecstasy was never interrupted." He noted what repeatedly befell him, that, after receiving from a distance a rare plant, he would presently find the same in his own haunts. And those pieces of luck which happen only to good players happened to him. One day, walking with a stranger, who inquired where Indian arrow-heads could be found, he replied, "Everywhere," and, stooping forward, picked one on the instant from the ground. At Mount Washington, in Tuckerman's Ravine, Thoreau had a bad fall, and sprained his foot. As he was in the act of getting up from his fall, he saw for the first time the leaves of the *Arnica mollis*.

His robust common sense, armed with stout hands, keen perceptions and strong will, cannot yet account for the superiority which shone in his simple and hidden life. I must add the cardinal fact, there was an excellent wisdom in him, proper to a rare class of men, which showed him the material world as a means and symbol. This discovery, which sometimes yields to poets certain casual and interrupted light, serving for the ornament of their writing, was in him an unsleeping insight; and whatever faults or obstructions of temperament might cloud it, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. In his youth, he said, one day, "The other world is all my art; my pencils will draw no other; my jack-knife will cut nothing else; I do not use it as a means." This was the muse and genius that ruled his opinions, conversation, studies, work and course of life. This made him a searching judge of men. At first glance he measured his companion, and, though insensible to some fine traits of culture, could very well report his weight and calibre. And this made the impression of genius which his conversation sometimes gave.

He understood the matter in hand at a glance, and saw the limitations and poverty of those he talked with, so that nothing seemed concealed from such terrible eyes. I have repeatedly known young men of sensibility converted in a moment to the belief that this was the man they were in search of, the man of men, who could tell them all they should do. His own dealing with them was never affectionate, but superior, didactic,

scorning their petty ways, — very slowly conceding, or not conceding at all, the promise of his society at their houses, or even at his own. "Would he not walk with them?" "He did not know. There was nothing so important to him as his walk; he had no walks to throw away on company." Visits were offered him from respectful parties, but he declined them. Admiring friends offered to carry him at their own cost to the Yellowstone River, — to the West Indies, — to South America. But though nothing could be more grave or considered than his refusals, they remind one, in quite new relations, of that fop Brummel's reply to the gentleman who offered him his carriage in a shower, "But where will *you* ride, then?" — and what accusing silences, and what searching and irresistible speeches, battering down all defences, his companions can remember!

Mr. Thoreau dedicated his genius with such entire love to the fields, hills and waters of his native town, that he made them known and interesting to all reading Americans, and to people over the sea. The river on whose banks he was born and died he knew from its springs to its confluence with the Merrimack. He had made summer and winter observations on it for many years, and at every hour of the day and night. The result of the recent survey of the Water Commissioners appointed by the State of Massachusetts he had reached by his private experiments, several years earlier. Every fact which occurs in the bed, on the banks, or in the air over it; the fishes, and their spawning and nests, their manners, their food; the shad-flies which fill the air on a certain evening once a year, and which are snapped at by the fishes so ravenously that many of these die of repletion; the conical heaps of small stones on the river-shallows, the huge nests of small fishes, one of which will sometimes overfill a cart; the birds which frequent the stream, heron, duck, sheldrake, loon, osprey; the snake, muskrat, otter, woodchuck and fox, on the banks; the turtle, frog, hyla and cricket, which make the banks vocal, — were all known to him, and, as it were, townsmen and fellow-creatures; so that he felt an absurdity or violence in any narrative of one of these by itself apart, and still more of its dimensions on an inch-rule, or in the exhibition of its skeleton, or the specimen of a squirrel or a bird in brandy. He liked to speak of the manners of the river, as itself a lawful creature, yet with exactness, and always to an observed fact. As he knew the river, so the ponds in this region.

One of the weapons he used, more important to him than microscope or alcohol-receiver to other investigators, was a whim which grew on him by indulgence, yet appeared in gravest statement, namely, of extolling his own town and neighbourhood as the most favoured centre for natural observation. He remarked that the Flora of Massachusetts embraced almost all the important plants of America, — most of the oaks, most of the willows, the best pines, the ash, the maple, the beech, the nuts. He returned Kane's *Arctic Voyage* to a friend of whom he had borrowed it, with the remark,

that "Most of the phenomena noted might be observed in Concord." He seemed a little envious of the Pole, for the coincident sunrise and sunset, or five minutes' day after six months: a splendid fact, which Annursnuc had never afforded him. He found red snow in one of his walks, and told me that he expected to find yet the *Victoria regia* in Concord. He was the attorney of the indigenous plants, and owned to a preference of the weeds to the imported plants as of the Indian to the civilized man, and noticed, with pleasure, that the willow bean-poles of his neighbour had grown more than his beans. "See these weeds," he said, "which have been hoed at by a million farmers all spring and summer, and yet have prevailed, and just now come out triumphant over all lanes, pastures, fields and gardens, such is their vigour. We have insulted them with low names, too, — as Pigweed, Wormwood, Chickweed, Shad-blossom." He says, "They have brave names, too, — Ambrosia, Stellaria, Amelanchier, Amaranth, etc."

I think his fancy for referring everything to the meridian of Concord did not grow out of any ignorance or depreciation of other longitudes or latitudes, but was rather a playful expression of his conviction of the indifference of all places, and that the best place for each is where he stands. He expressed it once in this wise: — "I think nothing is to be hoped from you, if this bit of mould under your feet is not sweeter to you to eat than any other in this world, or in any world."

The other weapon with which he conquered all obstacles in science was patience. He knew how to sit immovable, a part of the rock he rested on, until the bird, the reptile, the fish, which had retired from him, should come back and resume its habits, nay, moved by curiosity, should come to him and watch him.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to walk with him. He knew the country like a fox or a bird, and passed through it as freely by paths of his own. He knew every track in the snow or on the ground, and what creature had taken this path before him. One must submit abjectly to such a guide, and the reward was great. Under his arm he carried an old music-book to press plants; in his pocket, his diary and pencil, a spyglass for birds, microscope, jack-knife, and twine. He wore a straw hat, stout shoes, strong grey trousers, to brave scrub-oaks and smilax, and to climb a tree for a hawk's or a squirrel's nest. He waded into the pool for the water-plants, and his strong legs were no insignificant part of his armour. On the day I speak of he looked for the *Menyanthes*, detected it across the wide pool, and, on examination of the florets, decided that it had been in flower five days. He drew out of his breast-pocket his diary, and read the names of all the plants that should bloom on this day, whereof he kept account as a banker when his notes fall due. The *Cypripedium* not due till tomorrow. He thought that, if waked up from a trance, in this swamp, he could tell by the plants what time of the year it was within two days. The redstart was flying about, and presently the fine grosbeaks, whose brilliant scarlet "makes the rash gazer wipe his eye," and whose clear note Thoreau com-

pared to that of a tanager which has got rid of its hoarseness. Presently he heard a note which he called that of the night-warbler, a bird he had never identified, had been in search of twelve years, which always, when he saw it, was in the act of diving down into a tree or bush, and which it was vain to seek; the only bird which sings indifferently by night and by day. I told him he must beware of finding and booking it, lest life should have nothing more to show him. He said, "What you seek in vain for, half your life, one day you come full upon, all the family at dinner. You seek it like a dream, and as soon as you find it you become its prey."

His interest in the flower or the bird lay very deep in his mind, was connected with Nature, — and the meaning of Nature was never attempted to be defined by him. He would not offer a memoir of his observations to the Natural History Society. "Why should I? To detach the description from its connexions in my mind would make it no longer true or valuable to me: and they do not wish what belongs to it." His power of observation seemed to indicate additional senses. He saw as with microscope, heard as with ear-trumpet, and his memory was a photographic register of all he saw and heard. And yet none knew better than he that it is not the fact that imports, but the impression or effect of the fact on your mind. Every fact lay in glory in his mind, a type of the order and beauty of the whole.

His determination on Natural History was organic. He confessed that he sometimes felt like a hound or a panther, and, if born among Indians, would have been a fell hunter. But, restrained by his Massachusetts culture, he played out the game in this mild form of botany and ichthyology. His intimacy with animals suggested what Thomas Fuller records of Butler the apiologist, that "either he had told the bees things or the bees had told him." Snakes coiled round his leg; the fishes swam into his hand, and he took them out of the water; he pulled the woodchuck out of its hole by the tail and took the foxes under his protection from the hunters. Our naturalist had perfect magnanimity; he had no secrets: he would carry you to the heron's haunt, or even to his most prized botanical swamp, — possibly knowing that you could never find it again, yet willing to take his risks.

No college ever offered him a diploma, or a professor's chair; no academy made him its corresponding secretary, its discoverer, or even its member. Perhaps these learned bodies feared the satire of his presence. Yet so much knowledge of Nature's secret and genius few others possessed; none in a more large and religious synthesis. For not a particle of respect had he to the opinions of any man or body of men, but homage solely to the truth itself; and as he discovered everywhere among doctors some leaning of courtesy, it discredited them. He grew to be revered and admired by his townsmen, who had at first known him only as an oddity. The farmers who employed him as a surveyor soon discovered his rare accuracy and skill, his knowledge of their lands, of trees, of birds, of Indian remains and the like, which enabled him to tell every farmer more than he knew before of his own farm; so that he began to feel a little as if Mr. Thoreau

had better rights in his land than he. They felt, too, the superiority of character which addressed all men with a native authority.

Indian relics abounded in Concord, — arrow-heads, stone chisels, pestles, and fragments of pottery; and on the river-bank, large heaps of clamshells and ashes mark spots which the savages frequented. These, and every circumstance touching the Indian, were important in his eyes. His visits to Maine were chiefly for love of the Indian. He had the satisfaction of seeing the manufacture of the bark-canoe, as well as of trying his hand in its management on the rapids. He was inquisitive about the making of the stone arrow-heads, and in his last days charged a youth setting out for the Rocky Mountains to find an Indian who could tell him that: "It was well worth a visit to California to learn it. Occasionally, a small party of Penobscot Indians would visit Concord, and pitch their tents for a few weeks in summer on the river-bank. He failed not to make acquaintance with the best of them; though he well knew that asking questions of Indians is like catechizing beavers and rabbits. In his last visit to Maine he had great satisfaction from Joseph Polis, an intelligent Indian of Oldtown, who was his guide for some weeks.

He was equally interested in every natural fact. The depth of his perception found likeness of law throughout Nature, and I know not any genius who so swiftly inferred universal law from the single fact. He was no pedant of a department. His eye was open to beauty, and his ear to music. He found these, not in rare conditions, but wheresoever he went. He thought the best of music was in single strains; and he found poetic suggestions in the humming of the telegraph-wire.

His poetry might be bad or good; he no doubt wanted a lyric facility and technical skill, but he had the source of poetry in his spiritual perception. He was a good reader and critic, and his judgment on poetry was to the ground of it. He could not be deceived as to the presence or absence of the poetic element in any composition, and his thirst for this made him negligent and perhaps scornful of superficial graces. He would pass by many delicate rhythms, but he would have detected every live stanza or line in a volume, and knew very well where to find an equal poetic charm in prose. He was so enamoured of the spiritual beauty that he held all actual written poems in very light esteem in the comparison. He admired *Æschylus* and *Pindar*; but, when some one was commending them, he said that *Æschylus* and the Greeks, in describing *Apollo* and *Orpheus*, had given no song, or no good one. "They ought not to have moved trees, but to have chanted to the gods such a hymn as would have sung all their old ideas out of their heads, and new ones in." His own verses are often rude and defective. The gold does not yet run pure, is drossy and crude. The thyme and marjoram are not yet honey. But if he want lyric fineness and technical merits, if he have not the poetic temperament, he never lacks the causal thought, showing that his genius was better than his talent. He knew the worth of the

Imagination for the uplifting and consolation of human life, and liked to throw every thought into a symbol. The fact you tell is of no value, but only the impression. For this reason his presence was poetic, always piqued the curiosity to know more deeply the secrets of his mind. He had many reserves, an unwillingness to exhibit to profane eyes what was still sacred in his own, and knew well how to throw a poetic veil over his experience. All readers of "Walden" will remember his mythical record of his disappointments: —

"I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks, and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who have heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud; and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves."

His riddles were worth the reading, and I confide that if at any time I do not understand the expression, it is yet just. Such was the wealth of his truth that it was not worth his while to use words in vain. His poem entitled "Sympathy" reveals the tenderness under that triple steel of stoicism, and the intellectual subtlety it could animate. His classic poem on "Smoke" suggests Simonides, but is better than any poem of Simonides. His biography is in his verses. His habitual thought makes all his poetry a hymn to the Cause of causes, the Spirit which vivifies and controls his own: —

*I hearing get, who had but ears,
And sight, who had but eyes before;
I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern, who knew but learning's lore.*

And still more in these religious lines: —

*Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life;
I will not doubt the love untold,
Which not my worth nor want have bought,
Which wooed me young, and woos me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.*

Whilst he used in his writings a certain petulance of remark in reference to churches or churchmen, he was a person of a rare, tender and absolute religion, a person incapable of any profanation, by act or by thought. Of course, the same isolation which belonged to his original thinking and living detached him from the social religious forms. This is neither to be censured nor regretted. Aristotle long ago explained it, when he said, "One who surpasses his fellow-citizens in virtue is no longer a part of the city. Their law is not for him, since he is a law to himself."

Thoreau was sincerity itself, and might fortify the convictions of prophets in the ethical laws by his holy living. It was an affirmative experience which refused to be set aside. A truth-speaker he, capable of the most deep and strict conversation; a physician to the wounds of any soul; a friend, knowing not only the secret of friendship, but almost worshipped by those few persons who resorted to him as their confessor and prophet, and knew the deep value of his mind and great heart. He thought that without religion or devotion of some kind nothing great was ever accomplished: and he thought that the bigoted sectarian had better bear this in mind.

His virtues, of course, sometimes ran into extremes. It was easy to trace to the inexorable demand on all for exact truth that austerity which made this willing hermit more solitary even than he wished. Himself of a perfect probity, he required not less of others. He had a disgust at crime, and no worldly success would cover it. He detected paltering as readily in dignified and prosperous persons as in beggars, and with equal scorn. Such dangerous frankness was in his dealing that his admirers called him "that terrible Thoreau," as if he spoke when silent, and was still present when he had departed. I think the severity of his ideal interfered to deprive him of a healthy sufficiency of human society.

The habit of a realist to find things the reverse of their appearance inclined him to put every statement in a paradox. A certain habit of antagonism defaced his earlier writings, — a trick of rhetoric not quite outgrown in his later, or substituting for the obvious word and thought its diametrical opposite. He praised wild mountains and winter forests for their domestic air, in snow and ice he would find sultriness, and commended the wilderness for resembling Rome and Paris. "It was so dry, that you might call it wet."

The tendency to magnify the moment, to read all the laws of Nature in the one object or one combination under your eye, is of course comic to those who do not share the philosopher's perception of identity. To him there was no such thing as size. The pond was a small ocean; the Atlantic, a large Walden Pond. He referred every minute fact to cosmical laws. Though he meant to be just, he seemed haunted by a certain chronic assumption that the science of the day pretended completeness, and he had just found out that the *savans* had neglected to discriminate a particular botanical variety, had failed to describe the seeds or count the sepals. "That is to say," we replied, "the blockheads were not born in Concord; but who said they were? It was their unspeakable misfortune to be born in London, or Paris, or Rome; but, poor fellows, they did what they could, considering that they never saw Bateman's Pond, or Nine-Acre Corner, or Becky Stow's Swamp; besides, what were you sent into the world for, but to add this observation?"

Had his genius been only contemplative, he had been fitted to his life, but with his energy and practical ability he seemed born for great enter-

prise and for command; and I so much regret the loss of his rare powers of action, that I cannot help counting it a fault in him that he had no ambition. Wanting this, instead of engineering for all America, he was the captain of a huckleberry-party. Pounding beans is good to the end of pounding empires one of these days; but if, at the end of years, it is still only beans!

But these foibles, real or apparent, were fast vanishing in the incessant growth of a spirit so robust and wise, and which effaced its defeats with new triumphs. His study of Nature was a perpetual ornament to him, and inspired his friends with curiosity to see the world through his eyes, and to hear his adventures. They possessed every kind of interest.

He had many elegancies of his own, whilst he scoffed at conventional elegance. Thus, he could not bear to hear the sound of his own steps, the grit of gravel; and therefore never willingly walked in the road, but in the grass, on mountains and in woods. His senses were acute, and he remarked that by night every dwelling-house gives out bad air, like a slaughter-house. He liked the pure fragrance of melilot. He honoured certain plants with special regard, and, over all, the pond-lily, — then, the gentian, and the *Mikania scandens*, and “life-everlasting,” and a bass-tree which he visited every year when it bloomed, in the middle of July. He thought the scent a more oracular inquisition than the sight, — more oracular and trustworthy. The scent, of course, reveals what is concealed from the other senses. By it he detected earthiness. He delighted in echoes, and said they were almost the only kind of kindred voices that he heard. He loved Nature so well, was so happy in her solitude, that he became very jealous of cities and the sad work which their refinements and artifices made with man and his dwelling. The axe was always destroying his forest. “Thank God,” he said, “they cannot cut down the clouds!” “All kinds of figures are drawn on the blue ground with this fibrous white paint.”

I subjoin a few sentences taken from his unpublished manuscripts, not only as records of his thought and feeling, but for their power of description and literary excellence: —

“Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk.”

“The chub is a soft fish, and tastes like boiled brown paper salted.”

“The youth gets together his materials to build a bridge to the moon, or, perchance, a palace or temple on the earth, and, at length the middle-aged man concludes to build a wood-shed with them.”

“The locust z-ing.”

“Devil’s-needles zigzagging along the Nut-Meadow brook.”

“Sugar is not so sweet to the palate as sound to the healthy ear.”

“I put on some hemlock-boughs, and the rich salt crackling of their leaves was like mustard to the ear, the crackling of uncountable regiments. Dead trees love the fire.”

“The bluebird carries the sky on his back.”

"The tanager flies through the green foliage as if it would ignite the leaves."

"If I wish for a horse-hair for my compass-sight I must go to the stable; but the hair-bird, with her sharp eyes, goes to the road."

"Immortal water, alive even to the superfluities."

"Fire is the most tolerable third party."

"Nature made ferns for pure leaves, to show what she could do in that line."

"No tree has so fair a bole and so handsome an instep as the beech."

"How did these beautiful rainbow-tints get into the shell of the freshwater clam, buried in the mud at the bottom of our dark river?"

"Hard are the times when the infant's shoes are second-foot."

"We are strictly confined to our men to whom we give liberty."

"Nothing is so much to be feared as fear. Atheism may comparatively be popular with God himself."



"Of what significance the things you can forget? A little thought is sexton to all the world."

"How can we expect a harvest of thought who have not had a seed-time of character?"

"Only he can be trusted with gifts who can present a face of bronze to expectations."

"I ask to be melted. You can only ask of the metals that they be tender to the fire that melts them. To nought else can they be tender."

There is a flower known to botanists, one of the same genus with our summer plant called "Life-Everlasting," a *Gnaphalium* like that, which grows on the most inaccessible cliffs of the Tyrolese mountains, where the chamois dare hardly venture, and which the hunter, tempted by its beauty, and by his love (for it is immensely valued by the Swiss maidens), climbs the cliffs to gather, and is sometimes found dead at the foot, with the flower in his hand. It is called by botanists the *Gnaphalium leontopodium*, but by the Swiss *Edelweiss*, which signifies *Noble Purity*. Thoreau seemed to me living in the hope to gather this plant, which belonged to him of right. The scale on which his studies proceeded was so large as to require longevity, and we were the less prepared for his sudden disappearance. The country knows not yet or in the least part, how great a son it has lost. It seems an injury that he should leave in the midst his broken task which none else can finish, a kind of indignity to so noble a soul that he should depart out of Nature before yet he has been really shown to his peers for what he is. But he, at least, is content. His soul was made for the noblest society; he had in a short life exhausted the capabilities of this world; wherever there is knowledge, wherever there is virtue, wherever there is beauty, he will find a home.



WALT WHITMAN

1819-1892

By JOHN BURROUGHS ¹ (1837-1921)



I

WALT WHITMAN was born at West Hills, Long Island, May 30, 1819, and died at Camden, N. J., March 26, 1892. Though born in the country, most of his life was passed in cities; first in Brooklyn and New York, then in New Orleans, then in Washington, and lastly in Camden, where his body is buried. It was a poet's life from first to last, — free, unhampered, unworldly, unconventional, picturesque, simple, untouched by the craze of money-getting, unselfish, devoted to others, and was, on the whole, joyfully and contentedly lived. It was a pleased and interested saunter through the world, — no hurry, no fever, no strife; hence no bitterness, no depletion, no wasted energies. A farm boy, then a school-teacher, then a printer, editor, writer, traveller, mechanic, nurse in the army hospitals, and lastly government clerk; large and picturesque of figure, slow of movement; tolerant, passive, receptive, and democratic, — of the people; in all his tastes and attractions, always aiming to walk abreast with the great laws and forces, and to live thoroughly in the free, nonchalant spirit of his own day and land. His strain was mingled Dutch and English, with a decided Quaker tinge, which came from his mother's side, and which had a marked influence upon his work.

The spirit that led him to devote his time and substance to the sick and wounded soldiers during the war may be seen in that earlier incident in his life when he drove a Broadway stage all one winter, that a disabled driver might lie by without starving his family. It is from this episode that the tradition of his having been a New York stage-driver comes. He seems always to have had a special liking for this class of workmen. One of the house surgeons of the old New York Hospital relates that in the latter part of the fifties Whitman was a frequent visitor to that institution, looking after and ministering to disabled stage-drivers. "These drivers," says the doctor, "like those of the omnibuses in London, were a set of men by themselves. A good deal of strength, intelligence, and skilful management of horses was required of a Broadway stage-driver. He seems to have

¹ This biography — under the title *Biographical and Personal* — is reprinted from Burrough's *Walt Whitman, a Study*, Boston, 1896; copyright 1896, by John Burroughs. It is reprinted by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin & Co., Boston.

been decidedly a higher order of man than the driver of the present horse-cars. He usually had his primary education in the country, and graduated as a thorough expert in managing a very difficult machine, in an exceptionally busy thoroughfare.

"It was this kind of a man that so attracted Walt Whitman that he was constantly to be seen perched on the box alongside one of them going up and down Broadway. I often watched the poet and driver, as probably did many another New Yorker in those days.

"I do not wonder as much now as I did in 1860 that a man like Walt Whitman became interested in these drivers. He was not interested in the news of everyday life — the murders and accidents and political convulsions — but he was interested in strong types of human character. We young men had not had experience enough to understand this kind of a man. It seems to me now that we looked at Whitman simply as a kind of crank, if the word had then been invented. His talk to us was chiefly of books, and the men who wrote them: especially of poetry, and what he considered poetry. He never said much of the class whom he visited in our wards, after he had satisfied himself of the nature of the injury and of the prospect of recovery.

"Whitman appeared to be about forty years of age at that time. He was always dressed in a blue flannel coat and vest, with grey and baggy trousers. He wore a woollen shirt, with a Byronic collar, low in the neck, without a cravat, as I remember, and a large felt hat. His hair was iron grey, and he had a full beard and moustache of the same colour. His face and neck were bronzed by exposure to the sun and air. He was large, and gave the impression of being a vigorous man. He was scrupulously careful of his simple attire, and his hands were soft and hairy."

During the early inception of "Leaves of Grass" he was a carpenter in Brooklyn, building and selling small frame-houses to working people. He frequently knocked off work to write his poems. In his life Whitman was never one of the restless, striving sort. In this respect he was not typical of his countrymen. All his urgency and strenuousness he reserved for his book. He seems always to have been a sort of visitor in life, noting, observing, absorbing, keeping aloof from all ties that would hold him, and making the most of the hour and the place in which he happened to be. He was in no sense a typical literary man. During his life in New York and Brooklyn, we see him moving entirely outside the fashionable circles, the learned circles, the literary circles, the money-getting circles. He belongs to no set or club. He is seen more with the labouring classes, — drivers, boatmen, mechanics, printers, — and I suspect may often be found with publicans and sinners. He is fond of the ferries and of the omnibuses. He is a frequenter of the theatre and of the Italian opera. Alboni makes a deep and lasting impression upon him. It is probably to her that he writes these lines: —

*Here take this gift,
 I was reserving it for some hero, speaker, general,
 One who should serve the good old cause, the great idea, the progress and
 freedom of the race,
 Some brave confronter of despots, some daring rebel;
 But I see that what I was reserving belongs to you just as much as to any.*

Elsewhere he refers to Alboni by name and speaks of her as

*The lustrous orb, Venus contralto, the blooming mother,
 Sister of loftiest gods.*

Some of his poems were written at the opera. The great singers evidently gave him clues and suggestions that were applicable to his own art.

His study was out of doors. He wrote on the street, on the ferry, at the seaside, in the fields, at the opera, — always from living impulses arising at the moment, and always with his eye upon the fact. He says he has read his "Leaves" to himself in the open air, and tried them by the realities of life and nature about them. Were they as real and alive as they? — this was the only question with him.

At home in his father's family in Brooklyn we see him gentle, patient, conciliatory, much looked up to by all. Neighbours seek his advice. He is cool, deliberate, impartial. A marked trait is his indifference to money matters; his people are often troubled because he lets opportunities to make money pass by. When his "Leaves" appear, his family are puzzled, do not know what to make of it. His mother thinks that, if "Hiawatha" is poetry, maybe Walt's book is, too. He never counsels with anyone, and is utterly indifferent as to what people may say or think. He is not a stirring and punctual man, is always a little late; not an early riser, not prompt at dinner; always has ample time, and will not be hurried; the business gods do not receive his homage. He is grey at thirty, and is said to have had a look of age in youth, as he had a look of youth in age. He has few books, cares little for sport, never uses a gun; has no bad habits; has no entanglements with women, and apparently never contemplates marriage. It is said that during his earliest years of manhood he kept quite aloof from the "girls."

At the age of nineteen he edited *The Long Islander*, published at Huntington. A recent visitor to these early haunts of Whitman gathered some reminiscences of him at this date: —

"Amid the deep reverie of nature, on that mild October afternoon, we returned to the village of Huntington, there to meet the few, the very few, survivors who recall Walt's first appearance in the literary world as the editor of *The Long Islander*, nigh sixty years ago (1838). Two of these forefathers of the hamlet clearly remembered his powerful person-

ality, brimfull of life, revelling in strength, careless of time and the world, of money and of toil; a lover of books and of jokes; delighting to gather round him the youth of the village in his printing-room of evenings, and tell them stories and read them poetry, his own and others'. That of his own he called his 'Yawps,' a word which he afterwards made famous. Both remembered him as a delightful companion, generous to a fault, glorying in youth, negligent of his affairs, issuing *The Long Islander* at random intervals, — once a week, once in two weeks, once in three, — until its financial backers lost faith and hope and turned him out, and with him the whole office corps; for Walt himself was editor, publisher, compositor, pressman, and printer's devil, all in one."

II

Few men were so deeply impressed by our Civil War as was Whitman. It aroused all his patriotism, all his sympathies, and, as a poet, tested his power to deal with great contemporary events and scenes. He was first drawn to the seat of war on behalf of his brother, Lieutenant-Colonel George W. Whitman, 51st New York Volunteers, who was wounded by the fragment of a shell at Fredericksburg. This was in the fall of 1862. This brought him in contact with the sick and wounded soldiers, and henceforth, as long as the war lasted and longer, he devoted his time and substance to ministering to them. The first two or three years of his life in Washington he supported himself by correspondence with Northern newspapers, mainly with the *New York Times*. These letters, as well as the weekly letters to his mother during the same period, form an intensely pathetic and interesting record.

They contain such revelations of himself, and such pictures of the scenes he moved among, that I shall here quote freely from them. The following extract is from a letter written from Fredericksburg the third or fourth day after the battle of December, 1862: —

"Spent a good part of the day in a large brick mansion on the banks of the Rappahannock, immediately opposite Fredericksburg. It is used as a hospital since the battle, and seems to have received only the worst cases. Out of doors, at the foot of a tree, within ten yards of the front of the house, I notice a heap of amputated feet, legs, arms, hands, etc., about a load for a one-horse cart. Several dead bodies lie near, each covered with its brown woollen blanket. In the door-yard, toward the river, are fresh graves, mostly of officers, their names on pieces of barrel-staves, or broken board, stuck in the dirt. [Most of these bodies were subsequently taken up and transported North to their friends.]

"The house is quite crowded, everything impromptu, no system, all bad enough, but I have no doubt the best that can be done; all the wounds pretty bad, some frightful, the men in their old clothes, unclean

and bloody. Some of the wounded are rebel officers, prisoners. One, a Mississippian, — a captain, — hit badly in leg, I talked with some time; he asked me for papers, which I gave him. (I saw him three months afterward in Washington, with leg amputated, doing well.)

"I went through the rooms, downstairs and up. Some of the men were dying. I had nothing to give at that visit, but wrote a few letters to folks home, mothers, etc. Also talked to three or four who seemed most susceptible to it, and needing it.

"December 22 to 31. — Am among the regimental, brigade, and division hospitals somewhat. Few at home realize that these are merely tents, and sometimes very poor ones, the wounded lying on the ground, lucky if their blanket is spread on a layer of pine or hemlock twigs, or some leaves. No cots; seldom even a mattress on the ground. It is pretty cold. I go around from one case to another. I do not see that I can do any good, but I cannot leave them. Once in a while some youngster holds on to me convulsively, and I do what I can for him; at any rate, stop with him and sit near him for hours, if he wishes it.

"Besides the hospitals, I also go occasionally on long tours through the camps, talking with the men, etc.; sometimes at night among the groups around the fires, in their shebang enclosures of bushes. I soon get acquainted anywhere in camp, with officers or men, and am always well used. Sometimes I go down on picket with the regiments I know best."

After continuing in front through the winter, he returns to Washington, where the wounded and sick have mainly been concentrated. The Capital city, truly, is now one huge hospital; and there Whitman establishes himself, and thenceforward, for several years, has but one daily and nightly avocation.

He alludes to writing letters by the bedside, and says: —

"I do a good deal of this, of course, writing all kinds, including love-letters. Many sick and wounded soldiers have not written home to parents, brothers, sisters, and even wives, for one reason or another, for a long, long time. Some are poor writers, some cannot get paper and envelopes; many have an aversion to writing, because they dread to worry the folks at home, — the facts about them are so sad to tell. I always encourage the men to write, and promptly write for them."

A glimpse of the scenes after Chancellorsville: —

"As I write this, in May, 1863, the wounded have begun to arrive from Hooker's command from bloody Chancellorsville. I was down among the first arrivals. The men in charge of them told me the bad cases were yet to come. If that is so, I pity them, for these are bad enough. You ought to see the scene of the wounded arriving at the landing here foot of

Sixth Street at night. Two boat-loads came about half past seven last night. A little after eight, it rained a long and violent shower. The poor, pale, helpless soldiers had been debarked, and lay around on the wharf and neighbourhood anywhere. The rain was, probably, grateful to them; at any rate they were exposed to it.

"The few torches light up the spectacle. All around on the wharf, on the ground, out on side places, etc., the men are lying on blankets and old quilts, with the bloody rags bound round heads, arms, legs, etc. The attendants are few, and at night few outsiders also, — only a few hard-worked transportation men and drivers. (The wounded are getting to be common, and people grow callous.) The men, whatever their condition, lie there, and patiently wait till their turn comes to be taken up. Near by the ambulances are now arriving in clusters, and one after another is called to back up and take its load. Extreme cases are sent off on stretchers. The men generally make little or no ado, whatever their sufferings, — a few groans that cannot be repressed, and occasionally a scream of pain, as they lift a man into the ambulance.

"Today, as I write, hundreds more are expected, and tomorrow and the next day more, and so on for many days.

"The soldiers are nearly all young men, and far more American than is generally supposed, — I should say nine tenths are native-born. Among the arrivals from Chancellorsville I find a large proportion of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois men. As usual, there are all sorts of wounds. Some of the men are fearfully burnt from the explosion of artillery caissons. One ward has a long row of officers, some with ugly hurts. Yesterday was, perhaps, worse than usual. Amputations are going on, — the attendants are dressing wounds. As you pass by, you must be on your guard where you look. I saw, the other day, a gentleman — a visitor, apparently, from curiosity — in one of the wards stop and turn a moment to look at an awful wound they were probing, etc. He turned pale, and in a moment more he had fainted away and fallen on the floor."

An episode, — the death of a New York soldier: —

"This afternoon, July 22, 1863, I spent a long time with a young man I have been with a good deal from time to time, named Oscar F. Wilber, company G, 154th New York, low with chronic diarrhoea, and a bad wound also. He asked me to read him a chapter in the New Testament. I complied, and asked him what I should read. He said: 'Make your own choice.' I opened at the close of one of the first books of the Evangelists, and read the chapters describing the latter hours of Christ and the scenes at the crucifixion. The poor, wasted young man asked me to read the following chapter also, how Christ rose again. I read very slowly, as Oscar was feeble. It pleased him very much, yet the tears were in his eyes. He asked me if I enjoyed religion. I said: 'Perhaps not, my dear, in the way

you mean, and yet, maybe, it is the same thing.' He said: 'It is my chief reliance.' He talked of death, and said he did not fear it. I said: 'Why, Oscar, don't you think you will get well?' He said: 'I may, but it is not probable.' He spoke calmly of his condition. The wound was very bad; it discharged much. Then the diarrhoea had prostrated him, and I felt that he was even then the same as dying. He behaved very manly and affectionate. The kiss I gave him as I was about leaving he returned fourfold. He gave me his mother's address, Mrs. Sally D. Wilber, Alleghany post office, Cattaraugus County, New York. I had several such interviews with him. He died a few days after the one just described."

And here, also, a characteristic scene in another of those long barracks: —

"It is Sunday afternoon (middle of summer, 1864), hot and oppressive, and very silent through the ward. I am taking care of a critical case, now lying in a half lethargy. Near where I sit is a suffering rebel, from the 8th Louisiana; his name is Irving. He has been here a long time, badly wounded, and has lately had his leg amputated. It is not doing very well. Right opposite me is a sick soldier boy, laid down with his clothes on, sleeping, looking much wasted, his pallid face on his arm. I see by the yellow trimming on his jacket that he is a cavalry boy. He looks so handsome as he sleeps, one must needs go nearer to him. I step softly over to him, and find by his card that he is named William Cone, of the 1st Maine Cavalry, and his folks live in Skowhegan."

In a letter to his mother in 1863 he says, in reference to his hospital services: "I have got in the way, after going lightly, as it were, all through the wards of a hospital, and trying to give a word of cheer, if nothing else, to everyone, then confining my special attention to the few where the investment seems to tell best, and who want it most. . . . Mother, I have real pride in telling you that I have the consciousness of saving quite a number of lives by keeping the men from giving up, and being a good deal with them. The men say it is so, and the doctors say it is so; and I will candidly confess I can see it is true, though I say it myself. I know you will like to hear it, mother, so I tell you."

Again he says: "I go among the worst fevers and wounds with impunity; I go among the smallpox, etc., just the same. I feel to go without apprehension, and so I go: nobody else goes; but, as the darkey said there at Charleston when the boat ran on a flat and the rebel sharpshooters were peppering them, '*somebody* must jump in de water and shove de boat off.'"

In another letter to his mother he thus accounts for his effect upon the wounded soldiers: "I fancy the reason I am able to do some good in the hospitals among the poor, languishing, and wounded boys, is that I am

so large and well,—indeed, like a great wild buffalo with much hair. Many of the soldiers are from the West and far North, and they like a man that has not the bleached, shiny, and shaved cut of the cities and the East.”

As to Whitman’s appearance about this time, we get an inkling from another letter to his mother, giving an account of an interview he had with Senator Preston King, to whom Whitman applied for assistance in procuring a clerkship in one of the departments. King said to him, “Why, how can I do this thing, or anything for you? How do I know but you are a secessionist? You look for all the world like an old Southern planter, — a regular Carolina or Virginia planter.”

The great suffering of the soldiers and their heroic fortitude move him deeply. He says to his mother: “Nothing of ordinary misfortune seems as it used to, and death itself has lost all its terrors; I have seen so many cases in which it was so welcome and such a relief.” Again: “I go to the hospitals every day or night. I believe no men ever loved each other as I and some of these poor wounded, sick, and dying men love each other.”

Whitman’s services in the hospitals began to tell seriously upon his health in June, 1864, when he had “spells of deathly faintness, and had trouble in the head.” The doctors told him he must keep away for a while, but he could not. Under date of June 7, 1864, he writes to his mother: —

“There is a very horrible collection in Armory Building [in Armory Square Hospital], — about two hundred of the worst cases you ever saw, and I have probably been too much with them. It is enough to melt the heart of a stone. Over one third of them are amputation cases. Well, mother, poor Oscar Cunningham is gone at last: (he is the 82d Ohio boy, wounded May 3, ’63). I have written so much of him I suppose you feel as if you almost knew him. I was with him Saturday forenoon, and also evening. He was more composed than usual; could not articulate very well. He died about two o’clock Sunday morning, very easy, they told me. I was not there. It was a blessed relief. His life has been misery for months. I believe I told you, last letter, I was quite blue from the deaths of several of the poor young men I knew well, especially two of whom I had strong hopes of their getting up. Things are going pretty badly with the wounded. They are crowded here in Washington in immense numbers, and all those that came up from the Wilderness and that region arrived here so neglected and in such plight it was awful (those that were at Fredericksburg, and also from Belle Plain). The papers are full of puffs, etc., but the truth is the largest proportion of worst cases get little or no attention.

“We receive them here with their wounds full of worms, — some all swelled and inflamed. Many of the amputations have to be done over again. One new feature is, that many of the poor, afflicted young men are crazy; every ward has some in it that are wandering. They have

suffered too much, and it is perhaps a privilege that they are out of their senses. Mother, it is most too much for a fellow, and I sometimes wish I was out of it; but I suppose it is because I have not felt first-rate myself."

Of the Ohio soldier above referred to, Whitman had written a few days before: "You remember I told you of him a year ago, when he was first brought in. I thought him the noblest specimen of a young Western man I had seen. A real giant in size, and always with a smile on his face. Oh, what a change! He has long been very irritable to everyone but me, and his frame is all wasted away."

To his brother Jeff he wrote: "Of the many I have seen die, or known of the past year, I have not seen or known of one who met death with any terror. Yesterday I spent a good part of the afternoon with a young man of seventeen named Charles Cutter, of Lawrence City, 1st Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, Battery M. He was brought into one of the hospitals mortally wounded in abdomen. Well, I thought to myself as I sat looking at him, it ought to be a relief to his folks, after all, if they could see how little he suffered. He lay very placid, in a half lethargy, with his eyes closed; it was very warm, and I sat a long while fanning him and wiping the sweat. At length he opened his eyes quite wide and clear, and looked inquiringly around. I said, "What is it, my dear? do you want anything?" He said quietly, with a good-natured smile, "Oh, nothing; I was only looking around to see who was with me." His mind was somewhat wandering, yet he lay so peaceful in his dying condition. He seemed to be a real New England country boy, so good-natured, with a pleasant, homely way, and quite fine-looking. Without any doubt, he died in course of the night."

Another extract from a letter to his mother in April, 1864: —

"Mother, you don't know what a feeling a man gets after being in the active sights and influences of the camp, the army, the wounded, etc. He gets to have a deep feeling he never experienced before, — the flag, the tune of Yankee Doodle, and similar things, produce an effect on a fellow never felt before. I have seen tears on the men's cheeks, and others turn pale under such circumstances. I have a little flag, — it belonged to one of our cavalry regiments, — presented to me by one of the wounded. It was taken by the rebels in a cavalry fight, and rescued by our men in a bloody little skirmish. It cost three men's lives just to get one little flag four by three. Our men rescued it, and tore it from the breast of a dead rebel. All that just for the name of getting their little banner back again. The man that got it was very badly wounded, and they let him keep it. I was with him a good deal. He wanted to give me something, he said; he did not expect to live; so he gave me the little banner as a keepsake. I mention this, mother, to show you a specimen of the feeling. There isn't a regiment of cavalry or infantry that wouldn't do the same on occasion."

[An army surgeon, who at the time watched with curiosity Mr. Whitman's movements among the soldiers in the hospitals, has since told me that his principles of operation, effective as they were, seemed strangely few, simple, and on a low key, — to act upon the appetite, to cheer by a healthy and fitly bracing appearance and demeanour; and to fill and satisfy in certain cases the affectional longings of the patients, was about all. He carried among them no sentimentalism nor moralizing; spoke not to any man of his "sins," but gave something good to eat, a buoying word, or a trifling gift and a look. He appeared with ruddy face, clean dress, with a flower or a green sprig in the lapel of his coat. Crossing the fields in summer, he would gather a great bunch of dandelion blossoms, and red and white clover, to bring and scatter on the cots, as reminders of outdoor air and sunshine.]

When practicable, he came to the long and crowded wards of the maimed, the feeble, and the dying, only after preparations as for a festival, — strengthened by a good meal, rest, the bath, and fresh under-clothes. He entered with a huge haversack slung over his shoulder, full of appropriate articles, with parcels under his arms, and protuberant pockets. He would sometimes come in summer with a good-sized basket filled with oranges, and would go round for hours paring and dividing them among the feverish and thirsty.]

Of his devotion to the wounded soldiers there are many witnesses. A well-known correspondent of the *New York Herald* writes thus about him in April, 1876: —

"I first heard of him among the sufferers on the Peninsula after a battle there. Subsequently I saw him, time and again, in the Washington hospitals, or wending his way there, with basket or haversack on his arm, and the strength of beneficence suffusing his face. His devotion surpassed the devotion of woman. It would take a volume to tell of his kindness, tenderness, and thoughtfulness.

"Never shall I forget one night when I accompanied him on his rounds through a hospital filled with those wounded young Americans whose heroism he has sung in deathless numbers. There were three rows of cots, and each cot bore its man. When he appeared, in passing along, there was a smile of affection and welcome on every face, however wan, and his presence seemed to light up the place as it might be lighted by the presence of the God of Love. From cot to cot they called him, often in tremulous tones or in whispers; they embraced him; they touched his hand; they gazed at him. To one he gave a few words of cheer; for another he wrote a letter home; to others he gave an orange, a few comfits, a cigar, a pipe and tobacco, a sheet of paper or a postage stamp, all of which and many other things were in his capacious haversack. From another he would receive a dying message for mother, wife, or sweetheart; for

another he would promise to go an errand; to another, some special friend very low, he would give a manly farewell kiss. He did the things for them no nurse or doctor could do, and he seemed to leave a benediction at every cot as he passed along. The lights had gleamed for hours in the hospital that night before he left it, and, as he took his way towards the door, you could hear the voices of many a stricken hero calling, 'Walt, Walt, Walt! come again! come again! ' ”

III

Out of that experience in camp and hospital the pieces called "Drum-Taps," first published in 1865, — since merged in his "Leaves," — were produced. Their descriptions and pictures, therefore, come from life. The vivid incidents of "The Dresser" are but daguerreotypes of the poet's own actual movements among the bad cases of the wounded after a battle. The same personal knowledge runs through "A Sight in Camp in the Daybreak Gray and Dim," "Come up from the Fields, Father," etc., etc.

The reader of this section of Whitman's work soon discovers that it is not the purpose of the poet to portray battles and campaigns, or to celebrate special leaders or military prowess, but rather to chant the human aspects of anguish that follow in the train of war. He perhaps feels that the permanent condition of modern society is that of peace; that war as a business, as a means of growth, has served its time; and that, notwithstanding the vast difference between ancient and modern warfare, both in the spirit and in the means, Homer's pictures are essentially true yet, and no additions to them can be made. War can never be to us what it has been to the nations of all ages down to the present; never the main fact, the paramount condition, tyrannizing over all the affairs of national and individual life, but only an episode, a passing interruption; and the poet, who in our day would be as true to his nation and times as Homer was to his, must treat of it from the standpoint of peace and progress, and even benevolence. Vast armies rise up in a night and disappear in a day; a million of men, inured to battle and to blood, go back to the avocations of peace without a moment's confusion or delay, — indicating clearly the tendency that prevails.

Apostrophizing the genius of America in the supreme hour of victory, he says: —

No poem proud, I, chanting, bring to thee — nor mastery's rapturous verses: —

*But a little book containing night's darkness and blood-dripping wounds,
And psalms of the dead.*

The collection is also remarkable for the absence of all sectional or partisan feeling. Under the head of "Reconciliation" are these lines: —

Word over all, beautiful as the sky!

Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must in time be utterly lost!

That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly, softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;

. . . For my enemy is dead — a man divine as myself is dead;

I look where he lies, white-faced and still, in the coffin — I draw near;

I bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

Perhaps the most noteworthy of Whitman's war poems is the one called "When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloomed," written in commemoration of President Lincoln.

The main effect of this poem is of strong, solemn, and varied music; and it involves in its construction a principle after which perhaps the great composers mostly work, — namely, spiritual auricular analogy. At first it would seem to defy analysis, so rapt is it, and so indirect. No reference whatever is made to the mere fact of Lincoln's death; the poet does not even dwell upon its unprovoked atrocity, and only occasionally is the tone that of lamentation; but, with the intuitions of the grand art, which is the most complex when it seems most simple, he seizes upon three beautiful facts of nature, which he weaves into a wreath for the dead President's tomb. The central thought is of death, but around this he curiously twines, first, the early-blooming lilacs which the poet may have plucked the day the dark shadow came; next the song of the hermit thrush, the most sweet and solemn of all our songsters, heard at twilight in the dusky cedars; and with these the evening star, which, as many may remember, night after night in the early part of that eventful spring, hung low in the west with unusual and tender brightness. These are the premises whence he starts his solemn chant.

The attitude, therefore, is not that of being bowed down and weeping hopeless tears, but of singing a commemorative hymn, in which the voices of nature join, and fits that exalted condition of the soul which serious events and the presence of death induce. There are no words of mere eulogy, no statistics, and no story or narrative; but there are pictures, processions, and a strange mingling of darkness and light, of grief and triumph: now the voice of the bird, or the drooping lustrous star, or the sombre thought of death; then a recurrence to the open scenery of the land as it lay in the April light, "the summer approaching with richness and the fields all busy with labour," presently dashed in upon by a spectral vision of armies with torn and bloody battle-flags, and, again, of the white skeletons of young men long afterwards strewing the ground. Hence the piece has little or nothing of the character of the usual productions on such occasions. It is dramatic; yet there is no development of plot, but a constant interplay, a turning and returning of images and sentiments.

The poet breaks a sprig of lilac from the bush in the door-yard, — the dark cloud falls on the land, — the long funeral sets out, — and then the apostrophe: —

*Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night, with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags, with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves, as of crape-veiled women, standing,
With processions long and winding, and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit — with the silent sea of faces, and the un-
bared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and
solemn;
With all the mournful voices of the dirges, pour'd around the coffin,
To dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs — Where amid these you
journey,
With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang;
Here! coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.*

*(Not for you, for one alone;
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring;
For fresh as the morning — thus would I chant a song for you, O sane and
sacred death.*

*All over bouquets of roses,
O death! I cover you over with roses and early lilies;
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious, I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes;
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you, O death.)*

Then the strain goes on: —

*O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be, for the grave of him I love?*

*Sea-winds, blown from east and west,
Blown from the eastern sea, and blown from the western sea, till there on
the prairies meeting:
These, and with these, and the breath of my chant,
I perfume the grave of him I love.*

The poem reaches, perhaps, its height in the matchless invocation to Death: —

*Come, lovely and soothing Death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Prais'd be the fathomless universe,*

*Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious;
And for love, sweet love — but praise! O praise and praise,
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enjolding Death.*

*Dark Mother, always gliding near, with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee — I glorify thee above all;
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.*

*Approach, encompassing Death — strong Deliveress!
When it is so — when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O Death.*

*From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee — adornments and castings for
thee;
And the sights of the open landscape, and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.
The night, in silence, under many a star;
The ocean shore, and the husky whispering wave, whose voice I know;
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veil'd Death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.*

IV

Whitman despised riches, and all mere worldly success, as heartily as ever did any of the old Christians. All outward show and finery were intensely distasteful to him. He probably would not have accepted the finest house in New York on condition that he live in it. During his hospital experiences he cherished the purpose, as soon as the war was over, of returning to Brooklyn, buying an acre or two of land in some by-place on Long Island, and building for himself and his family a cheap house. When his brother Jeff contemplated building, he advised him to build merely an Irish shanty. After what he had seen the soldiers put up with, he thought anything was good enough for him or his people. In one of his letters to his mother, he comments upon the un-American and inappropriate ornamentation of the rooms in the Capitol building,

"without grandeur and without simplicity," he says. In the state the country was in, and with the hospital scenes before him, the "poppy-show goddesses" and the Italian style of decoration, etc., sickened him, and he got away from it all as quickly as he could.

V

During the war and after, I used to see a good deal of Whitman in Washington. Summer and winter he was a conspicuous figure on Pennsylvania Avenue, where he was wont to walk for exercise and to feed his hunger for faces. One would see him afar off, in the crowd but not of it, — a large, slow-moving figure, clad in grey, with broad-brimmed hat and grey beard, — or, quite as frequently, on the front platform of the street horse-cars with the driver. My eye used to single him out many blocks away.

There were times during this period when his aspect was rather forbidding, — the physical man was too pronounced on first glance; the other man was hidden beneath the broad-brimmed hat. One needed to see the superbly domed head and classic brow crowning the rank physical man.

In his middle manhood, judging from the photos, he had a hirsute, kindly look, but very far removed from the finely cut traditional poet's face.

VI

I have often heard Whitman say that he inherited most excellent blood from his mother, — the old Dutch Van Velsed strain, — Long Island blood filtered and vitalized through generations by the breath of the sea. He was his mother's child unmistakably. With all his rank masculinity, there was a curious feminine undertone in him which revealed itself in the quality of his voice, the delicate texture of his skin, the gentleness of his touch and ways, the attraction he had for children and the common people. A lady in the West, writing to me about him, spoke of his "great mother-nature." He was receptive, sympathetic, tender, and met you, not in a positive, aggressive manner, but more or less in a passive or neutral mood. He did not give his friends merely his mind, he gave them himself. It is not merely his mind or intellect that he has put into his poems, it is himself. Indeed, this feminine mood or attitude might be dwelt upon at much length in considering his poems, — their solvent, absorbing power, and the way they yield themselves to diverse interpretations.

The sea, too, had laid its hand upon him, as I have already suggested. He never appeared so striking and impressive as when seen upon the beach. His large and tall grey figure looked at home, and was at home, upon the shore. The simple, strong, flowing lines of his face, his always

clean fresh air, his blue absorbing eye, his commanding presence, and something pristine and elemental in his whole expression, seemed at once to put him *en rapport* with the sea. No phase of nature seems to have impressed him so deeply as the sea, or recurs so often in his poems.

VII

Whitman was pre-eminently manly, — richly endowed with the universal healthy human qualities and attributes. Mr. Conway relates that when Emerson handed him the first thin quarto edition of "Leaves of Grass," while he was calling at his house in Concord, soon after the book appeared, he said, "Americans abroad may not come home: unto us a man is born."

President Lincoln, standing one day during the war before a window in the White House, saw Whitman slowly saunter by. He followed him with his eyes, and, turning, said to those about him, "Well, *he* looks like a *man*."

Meeter of savage and gentleman on equal terms.

During Whitman's Western tour in 1879 or '80, at some point in Kansas, in company with several well-known politicians and government officials, he visited a lot of Indians who were being held as prisoners. The sheriff told the Indians who the distinguished men were who were about to see them, but the Indians paid little attention to them as, one after the other, the officials and editors passed by them. Behind all came Whitman. The old chief looked at him steadily, then extended his hand and said, "How!" All the other Indians followed, surrounding Whitman, shaking his hand and making the air melodious with their "Hows." The incident evidently pleased the old poet a good deal.

VIII

Whitman was of large mould in every way, and of bold, far-reaching schemes, and is very sure to fare better at the hands of large men than of small. The first and last impression which his personal presence always made upon one was of a nature wonderfully gentle, tender, and benignant. His culture, his intellect, was completely suffused and dominated by his humanity, so that the impression you got from him was not that of a learned or a literary person, but of fresh, strong, sympathetic human nature, — such an impression, I fancy, only fuller, as one might have got from Walter Scott. This was perhaps the secret of the attraction he had for the common, unlettered people and for children. I think that even his literary friends often sought his presence less for conversation than to bask in his physical or psychical sunshine, and to rest upon his boundless charity. The great service he rendered to the wounded and homesick soldiers in the hospitals during the war came from his copious endowment of this broad, sweet, tender democratic nature. He brought father

and mother to them, and the tonic and cheering atmosphere of simple, affectionate home life.

In person Whitman was large and tall, above six feet, with a breezy, open-air look. His temperament was sanguine; his voice was a tender baritone. The dominant impression he made was that of something fresh and clean. I remember the first time I met him, which was in Washington, in the fall of 1863. I was impressed by the fine grain and clean, fresh quality of the man. Some passages in his poems had led me to expect something different. He always had the look of a man who had just taken a bath. The skin was light and clear, and the blood well to the surface. His body, as I once noticed when we were bathing in the surf, had a peculiar fresh bloom and fineness and delicacy of texture. His physiology was undoubtedly remarkable, unique. The full beauty of his face and head did not appear till he was past sixty. After that, I have little doubt, it was the finest head this age or country has seen. Every artist who saw him was instantly filled with a keen desire to sketch him. The lines were so simple, so free, and so strong. High, arching brows; straight, clear-cut nose; heavy-lidded blue-grey eyes; forehead not thrust out and emphasized, but a vital part of a symmetrical, dome-shaped head; ear large, and the most delicately carved I have ever seen; the mouth and chin hidden by a soft, long, white beard. It seems to me his face steadily refined and strengthened with age. Time depleted him in just the right way, — softened his beard and took away the too florid look; subdued the carnal man, and brought out more fully the spiritual man. When I last saw him (December 26, 1891), though he had been very near death for many days, I am sure I had never seen his face so beautiful. There was no breaking-down of the features, or the least sign of decrepitude, such as we usually note in old men. The expression was full of pathos, but it was as grand as that of a god. I could not think of him as near death, he looked so unconquered.

In Washington I knew Whitman intimately from the fall of 1863 to the time he left in 1873. In Camden I visited him yearly after that date, usually in the late summer or fall. I will give one glimpse of him from my diary, under date of August 18, 1887. I reached his house in the morning, before he was up. Presently he came slowly downstairs and greeted me. "Find him pretty well, — looking better than last year. With his light-grey suit, and white hair, and fresh pink face, he made a fine picture. Among other things, we talked of the Swinburne attack (then recently published). W. did not show the least feeling on the subject, and, I clearly saw, was absolutely undisturbed by the article. I told him I had always been more disturbed by S.'s admiration for him than I was now by his condemnation. By and by W. had his horse hitched up, and we started for Glendale, ten miles distant, to see young Gilchrist, the artist. A fine drive through a level farming and truck-gardening country; warm,

but breezy. W. drives briskly, and salutes every person we meet, little and big, black and white, male and female. Nearly all return his salute cordially. He said he knew but few of those he spoke to, but that, as he grew older, the old Long Island custom of his people, to speak to everyone on the road, was strong upon him. One tipsy man in a buggy responded, 'Why, pap, how d'ye do, pap?' etc. We talked of many things. I recall this remark of W., as something I had not before thought of, that it was difficult to see what the old feudal world would have come to without Christianity: it would have been like a body acted upon by the centrifugal force without the centripetal. Those haughty lords and chieftains needed the force of Christianity to check and curb them, etc. W. knew the history of many prominent houses on the road: here a crazy man lived, with two coloured men to look after him; there, in that fine house among the trees, an old maid, who had spent a large fortune on her house and lands, and was destitute, yet she was a woman of remarkable good sense, etc. We returned to Camden before dark, W. apparently not fatigued by the drive of twenty miles."

In death what struck me most about the face was its perfect symmetry. It was such a face, said Mr. Conway, as Rembrandt would have selected from a million. "It is the face of an aged loving child. As I looked, it was with the reflexion that, during an acquaintance of thirty-six years, I never heard from those lips a word of irritation, or depreciation of any being. I do not believe that Buddha, of whom he appeared an avatar, was more gentle to all men, women, children, and living things."

IX

For one of the best pen-sketches of Whitman in his old age we are indebted to Dr. J. Johnston, a young Scotch physician of Bolton, England, who visited Whitman in the summer of 1890. I quote from a little pamphlet which the doctor printed on his return home: —

"The first thing about himself that struck me was the physical immensity and magnificent proportions of the man, and, next, the picturesque majesty of his presence as a whole.

"He sat quite erect in a great cane-runged chair, cross-legged, and clad in rough grey clothes, with slippers on his feet, and a shirt of pure white linen, with a great wide collar edged with white lace, the shirt buttoned about midway down his breast, the big lapels of the collar thrown open, the points touching his shoulders, and exposing the upper portion of his hirsute chest. He wore a vest of grey homespun, but it was unbuttoned almost to the bottom. He had no coat on, and his shirt sleeves were turned up above the elbows, exposing most beautifully shaped arms, and flesh of the most delicate whiteness. Although it was so hot, he did not perspire visibly, while I had to keep mopping my face. His hands are

large and massive, but in perfect proportion to the arms; the fingers long, strong, white, and tapering to a blunt end. His nails are square, showing about an eighth of an inch separate from the flesh, and I noticed that there was not a particle of impurity beneath any of them. But his majesty is concentrated in his head, which is set with leonine grace and dignity upon his broad, square shoulders; and it is almost entirely covered with long, fine, straggling hair, silvery and glistening, pure and white as sunlit snow, rather thin on the top of his high, rounded crown, streaming over and around his large but delicately-shaped ears, down the back of his big neck; and, from his pinky-white cheeks and top lip, over the lower part of his face, right down to the middle of his chest, like a cataract of materialized, white, glistening vapour, giving him a most venerable and patriarchal appearance. His high, massive forehead is seamed with wrinkles. His nose is large, strong, broad, and prominent, but beautifully chiseled and proportioned, almost straight, very slightly depressed at the tip, and with deep furrows on each side, running down to the angles of the mouth. The eyebrows are thick and shaggy, with strong, white hair, very highly arched and standing a long way above the eyes, which are of a light blue, with a tinge of grey, small, rather deeply set, calm, clear penetrating, and revealing unfathomable depths of tenderness, kindness, and sympathy. The upper eyelids droop considerably over the eyeballs. The lips, which are partly hidden by the thick, white mustache, are full. The whole face impresses one with a sense of resoluteness, strength, and intellectual power, and yet withal a winning sweetness, unconquerable radiance, and hopeful joyousness. His voice is highly pitched and musical, with a timbre which is astonishing in an old man. There is none of the tremor, quaver, or shrillness usually observed in them, but his utterance is clear, ringing, and most sweetly musical. But it was not in any one of these features that his charm lay so much as in his *tout ensemble*, and the irresistible magnetism of his sweet, aromatic presence, which seemed to exhale sanity, purity, and naturalness, and exercised over me an attraction which positively astonished me, producing an exaltation of mind and soul which no man's presence ever did before. I felt that I was here face to face with the living embodiment of all that was good, noble, and lovable in humanity."

X

British critics have spoken of Whitman's athleticism, his athletic temperament, etc., but he was in no sense a muscular man, an athlete. His body, though superb, was curiously the body of a child; one saw this in its form, in its pink color, and in the delicate texture of the skin. He took little interest in feats of strength, or in athletic sports. He walked with a slow, rolling gait, indeed, moved slowly in all ways; he always had an air of infinite leisure. For several years, while a clerk in the Attorney-

General's Office in Washington, his exercise for an hour each day consisted in tossing a few feet into the air, as he walked, a round, smooth stone, of about one pound weight, and catching it as it fell. Later in life, and after his first paralytic stroke, when in the woods, he liked to bend down the young saplings, and exercise his arms and chest in that way. In his poems much emphasis is laid upon health, and upon purity and sweetness of body, but none upon mere brute strength. This is what he says "To a Pupil": —

1. *Is reform needed? Is it through you?*

The greater the reform needed, the greater the PERSONALITY you need to accomplish it.

2. *You! do you not see how it would serve to have eyes, blood, complexion, clean and sweet?*

Do you not see how it would serve to have such a body and Soul, that when you enter the crowd, an atmosphere of desire and command enters with you, and every one is impressed with your personality?

3. *O the magnet! the flesh over and over!*

Go, mon cher! if need be, give up all else, and commence today to inure yourself to pluck, reality, self-esteem, definiteness, elevatedness, Rest not, till you rivet and publish yourself of your own personality.

It is worthy of note that Whitman's Washington physician said he had one of the most thoroughly natural physical systems he had ever known, — the freest, probably, from extremes or any disproportion; which answers to the perfect sanity which all his friends must have felt with regard to his mind.

A few years ago a young English artist stopping in this country made several studies of him. In one of them which he showed me, he had left the face blank, but had drawn the figure from the head down with much care. It was so expressive, so unmistakably Whitman, conveyed so surely a certain majesty and impressiveness that pertained to the poet physically, that I looked upon it with no ordinary interest. Every wrinkle in the garments seemed to proclaim the man. Probably a similar painting of any of one's friends would be more or less a recognizable portrait, but I doubt if it would speak so emphatically as did this incomplete sketch. I thought it all the more significant in this case because Whitman laid such stress upon the human body in his poems, built so extensively upon it, curiously identifying it with the soul, and declaring his belief that if he made the poems of his body and of mortality he would thus supply himself with the poems of the soul and of immortality. "Behold," he says, "the body includes and is the meaning, the main concern, and includes and is the soul; whoever you are, how superb and how divine is your body, or any

part of it! " He runs this physiological thread all through his book, and strings upon it many valuable lessons and many noble sentiments. Those who knew him well, I think, will agree with me that his bodily presence was singularly magnetic, restful, and positive, and that it furnished a curious and suggestive commentary upon much there is in his poetry.

The Greeks, who made so much more of the human body than we do, seem not to have carried so much meaning, so much history, in their faces as does the modern man; the soul was not concentrated here, but was more evenly distributed over the whole body. Their faces expressed repose, harmony, power of command. I think Whitman was like the Greeks in this respect. His face had none of the eagerness, sharpness, nervousness, of the modern face. It had but few lines, and these were Greek. From the mouth up, the face was expressive of Greek purity, simplicity, strength, and repose. The mouth was large and loose, and expressive of another side of his nature. It was a mouth that required the check and curb of that classic brow.

And the influence of his poems is always on the side of physiological cleanliness and strength, and severance from all that corrupts and makes morbid and mean. He says the "expression of a well-made man appears not only in his face: it is in his limbs and joints also; it is curiously in the joints of his hips and wrists; it is in his walk, the carriage of his neck, the flex of his waist and knees; dress does not hide him; the strong, sweet, supple quality he has strikes through the cotton and flannel; to see him pass conveys as much as the best poem, perhaps more. You linger to see his back, and the back of his neck and shoulder-side." He says he has perceived that to be with those he likes is enough: "To be surrounded by beautiful, curious, breathing, laughing flesh is enough, — I do not ask any more delight; I swim in it, as in a sea. There is something in staying close to men and women and looking on them, and in the contact and odor of them, that pleases the soul well. All things please the soul, but these please the soul well." Emerson once asked Whitman what it was he found in the society of the common people that satisfied him so; for his part, he could not find anything. The subordination of Whitman of the purely intellectual to the human and physical, which runs all through his poems and is one source of their power, Emerson, who was deficient in the sensuous, probably could not appreciate.

XI

The atmosphere of Whitman personally was that of a large, tolerant, tender, sympathetic, restful man, easy of approach, indifferent to any special social or other distinctions and accomplishments that might be yours, and regarding you from the start for yourself alone.

Children were very fond of him; and women, unless they had been

prejudiced against him, were strongly drawn toward him. His personal magnetism was very great, and was warming and cheering. He was rich in temperament, probably beyond any other man of his generation, — rich in all the purely human and emotional endowments and basic qualities. Then there was a look about him hard to describe, and which I have seen in no other face, — a grey, brooding, elemental look, like the granite rock, something primitive and Adamic that might have belonged to the first man; or was it a suggestion of the grey, eternal sea that he so loved, near which he was born, and that had surely set its seal upon him? I know not, but I feel the man with that look is not of the day merely, but of the centuries. His eye was not piercing, but absorbing, — “draining” is the word happily used by William O’Connor; the soul back of it drew things to himself, and entered and possessed them through sympathy and personal force and magnetism, rather than through mere intellectual force.

XII

Walt Whitman was of the people, the common people, and always gave out their quality and atmosphere. His commonness, his nearness, as of the things you have always known, — the day, the sky, the soil, your own parents, — were in no way veiled, or kept in abeyance, by his culture or poetic gifts. He was redolent of the human and the familiar. Though capable, on occasions, of great pride and hauteur, yet his habitual mood and presence was that of simple, average, healthful humanity, — the virtue and flavour of sailors, soldiers, labourers, travellers, or people who live with real things in the open air. His commonness rose into the uncommon, the extraordinary, but without any hint of the exclusive or especially favoured. He was indeed “no sentimentalist, no stander above men and women or apart from them.”

The spirit that animates every page of his book, and that it always effuses, is the spirit of common, universal humanity, — humanity apart from creeds, schools, conventions, from all special privileges and refinements, as it is in and of itself in its relations to the whole system of things, in contradistinction to the literature of culture which effuses the spirit of the select and exclusive.

His life was the same. Walt Whitman never stood apart from or above any human being. The common people — workingmen, the poor, the illiterate, the outcast — saw themselves in him, and he saw himself in them: the attraction was mutual. He was always content with common, unadorned humanity. Specially intellectual people rather repelled him; the wit, the scholar, the poet, must have a rich endowment of the common, universal, human attributes and qualities to pass current with him. He sought the society of boatmen, railroad men, farmers, mechanics, printers, teamsters,

mothers of families, etc., rather than the society of professional men or scholars. Men who had the quality of things in the open air, — the virtue of rocks, trees, hills — drew him most; and it is these qualities and virtues that he has aimed above all others to put into his poetry, and to put them there in such a way that he who reads must feel and imbibe them.

The recognized poets put into their pages the virtue and quality of the fine gentleman, or of the sensitive, artistic nature: this poet of democracy effuses the atmosphere of fresh, strong Adamic man, — man acted upon at first hand by the shows and forces of universal nature.

If our poet ever sounds the note of the crude, the loud, the exaggerated, he is false to himself and to his high aims. I think he may be charged with having done so a few times, in his earlier work, but not in his later. In the 1860 edition of his poems stands this portraiture, which may stand for himself, with one or two features rather overdrawn: —

His shape arises

Arrogant, masculine, naïve, rowdyish,

Laugher, weeper, worker, idler, citizen, countryman,

*Saunterer of woods, stander upon hills, summer swimmer in rivers or by
the sea,*

*Of pure American breed, of reckless health, his body perfect, free from
taint from top to toe, free for ever from headache and dyspepsia,
clean-breathed,*

*Ample-limbed, a good feeder, weight a hundred and eighty pounds, full-
blooded, six feet high, forty inches round the breast and back,*

Countenance sunburnt, bearded, calm, unrefined,

*Reminder of animals, meeter of savage and gentleman upon equal terms,
Attitudes lithe and erect, costume free, neck grey and open, of slow move-
ment on foot,*

*Passer of his right arm round the shoulders of his friends, companion of
the street,*

*Persuader always of people to give him their sweetest touches, and never
their meanest.*

*A Manhattanese bred, fond of Brooklyn, fond of Broadway, fond of the
life of the wharves and the great ferries,*

Enterer everywhere, welcomed everywhere, easily understood after all,

*Never offering others, always offering himself, corroborating his phrenology,
Voluptuous, inhabitive, combative, conscientious, alimentive, intuitive, of
copious friendship, sublimity, firmness, self-esteem, comparison, indi-
viduality, form, locality, eventuality,*

*Avowing by life, manners, words to contribute illustrations of results of
These States,*

Teacher of the unquenchable creed namely egotism,

Inviter of others continually henceforth to try their strength against his.

XIII

Whitman was determined, at whatever risk to his own reputation, to make the character which he has exploited in his poems a faithful compend of American humanity, and to do this the rowdy element could not be entirely ignored. Hence he unflinchingly imputes it to himself, as, for that matter, he has nearly every sin and dereliction mankind are guilty of.

Whitman developed slowly and late upon the side that related him to social custom and usage, — to the many fictions, concealments, make-believes, and subterfuges of the world of parlours and drawing-rooms. He never was an adept in what is called "good form"; the natural man that he was shows crude in certain relations. His publication of Emerson's letter with its magnificent eulogium of "Leaves of Grass" has been much commented upon. There may be two opinions as to the propriety of his course in this respect: a letter from a stranger upon a matter of public interest is not usually looked upon as a private letter. Emerson never spoke with more felicity and penetration than he does in this letter; but it is for Whitman's own sake that we would have had him practise self-denial in the matter; he greatly plumed himself upon Emerson's endorsement, and was guilty of the very bad taste of printing a sentence from the letter upon the cover of the next edition of his book. Grant that it showed a certain crudeness, unripeness, in one side of the man; later in life, he could not have erred in this way. Ruskin is reported saying that he never in his life wrote a letter to any human being that he would not be willing should be posted up in the market-place, or cried by the public crier through the town. But Emerson was a much more timid and conforming man than Ruskin, and was much more likely to be shocked by such a circumstance. It has been said that the publication of this letter much annoyed Emerson, and that he never forgave Whitman the offence. That he was disturbed by it and by the storm that arose there can be little doubt; but there is no evidence that he allowed the fact to interfere with his friendship for the poet. Charles W. Eldridge, who personally knew of the relations of the two men, says: —

"There was not a year from 1855 (the date of the Emerson letter and its publication) down to 1860 (the year Walt came to Boston to supervise the issue of the Thayer & Eldridge edition of 'Leaves of Grass'), that Emerson did not personally seek out Walt at his Brooklyn home, usually that they might have a long symposium together at the Astor House in New York. Besides that, during these years Emerson sent many of his closest friends, including Alcott and Thoreau, to see Walt, giving them letters of introduction to him. This is not the treatment usually accorded a man who has committed an unpardonable offence.

"I know that afterwards, during Walt's stay in Boston, Emerson frequently came down from Concord to see him, and that they had many

walks and talks together, these conferences usually ending with a dinner at the American House, at that time Emerson's favourite Boston hotel. On several occasions they met by appointment in our counting-room. Their relations were as friendly and cordial as possible, and it was always Emerson who sought out Walt, and never the other way, although, of course, Walt appreciated and enjoyed Emerson's companionship very much. In truth, Walt never sought the company of notables at all, and was always very shy of purely literary society. I know that at this time Walt was invited by Emerson to Concord, but declined to go, probably through his fear that he would see too much of the literary coterie that then clustered there, chiefly around Emerson."

XIV

Whitman gave himself to men as men and not as scholars and poets, and gave himself purely as a man. While not specially averse to meeting people on literary or intellectual grounds, yet it was more to his taste to meet on the broadest, commonest, human grounds. What you had seen or felt or suffered or done was of much more interest to him than what you had read or thought; your speculation about the soul interested him less than the last person you had met, or the last chore you had done.

Any glimpse of the farm, the shop, the household — any bit of real life, anything that carried the flavour and quality of concrete reality — was very welcome to him; herein, no doubt, showing the healthy, objective, artist mind. He never tired of hearing me talk about the birds or wild animals, or my experiences in camp in the woods, the kind of characters I had met there, and the flavour of the life of remote settlements in Maine or Canada. His inward, subjective life was ample of itself; he was familiar with all your thoughts and speculations beforehand: what he craved was wider experience, — to see what you had seen, and feel what you had felt. He was fond of talking with returned travellers and explorers, and with sailors, soldiers, mechanics; much of his vast stores of information upon all manner of subjects was acquired at first-hand, in the old way, from the persons who had seen or done or been what they described or related. He had almost a passion for simple, unlettered humanity, — an attraction which specially intellectual persons will hardly understand. Schooling and culture are so often purchased at such an expense to the innate, fundamental human qualities! Ignorance, with sound instincts and the quality which converse with real things imparts to men, was more acceptable to him than so much of our sophisticated knowledge, or our studied wit, or our artificial poetry.

XV

At the time of Whitman's death, one of our leading literary journals charged him with having brought on premature decay by leading a riotous

and debauched life. I hardly need say that there was no truth in the charge. The tremendous emotional strain of writing his "Leaves," followed by his years of service in the army hospitals, where he contracted blood-poison, resulted at the age of fifty-four in the rupture of a small blood-vessel in the brain, which brought on partial paralysis. A sunstroke during his earlier manhood also played its part in the final break-down.

That, tried by the standard of the lives of our New England poets, Whitman's life was a blameless one, I do not assert; but that it was a sane, temperate, manly one, free from excesses, free from the perversions and morbidities of a mammonish, pampered, over-stimulated age, I do believe. Indeed, I may say I know. The one impression he never failed to make — physically, morally, intellectually — on young and old, women and men, was that of health, sanity, sweetness. This is the impression he seems to have made upon Mr. Howells, when he met the poet at Pfaff's early in the sixties.

The critic I have alluded to inferred licence in the man from liberty in the poet. He did not have the gumption to see that Whitman made the experience of all men his own, and that his scheme included the evil as well as the good; that especially did he exploit the unloosed, all-loving, all-accepting natural man, — the man who is done with conventions, illusions and all morbid pietisms, and who gives himself lavishly to all that begets and sustains life. Yet not the natural or carnal man for his own sake, but for the sake of the spiritual meanings and values to which he is the key. Indeed, Whitman is about the most uncompromising spiritualist in literature; with him, all things exist by and for the soul. He felt the tie of universal brotherhood, also, as few have felt it. It was not a theory with him, but a fact that shaped his life and coloured his poems. "Whoever degrades another degrades me," and the thought fired his imagination.

XVI

The student of Whitman's life and works will be early struck by three things, — his sudden burst into song, the maturity of his work from the first, and his self-knowledge and self-estimate. The fit of inspiration came upon him suddenly; it was like the flowering of the orchards in spring; there was little or no hint of it till almost the very hour of the event. Up to the time of the appearance of the first edition of "Leaves of Grass," he had produced nothing above mediocrity. A hack writer on newspapers and magazines, then a carpenter and house-builder in a small way, then that astounding revelation "Leaves of Grass," the very audacity of it a gospel in itself. How dare he do it? how could he do it, and not betray hesitation or self-consciousness? It is one of the exceptional events in literary history. The main body of his work was produced in five or six years, or between 1854 and 1859. Of course it was a sudden flowering, which consciously or

unconsciously, must have been long preparing in his mind. His work must have had a long foreground, as Emerson suggested. Dr. Bucke, his biographer, thinks it was a special inspiration, — something analogous to Paul's conversion, a sudden opening of what the doctor calls "cosmic consciousness."

Another student and lover of Whitman says: "It is certain that some time about his thirty-fifth year [probably a little earlier] there came over him a decided change: he seemed immensely to broaden and deepen; he became less interested in what are usually regarded as the more practical affairs of life. He lost what little ambition he ever had for money-making, and permitted good business opportunities to pass unheeded. He ceased to write the somewhat interesting but altogether commonplace and respectable stories and verses which he had been in the habit of contributing to periodicals. He would take long trips into the country, no one knew where, and would spend more time in his favourite haunts about the city, or on the ferries, or the tops of omnibuses, at the theatre and opera, in picture galleries, and wherever he could observe men and women and art and nature."

Then the maturity of his work from the first line of it! It seems as if he came into the full possession of himself and of his material at one bound, — never had to grope for his way and experiment, as most men do. What apprenticeship he served, or with whom he served it, we get no hint. He has come to his own, and is in easy, joyful possession of it, when he first comes into view. He outlines his scheme in his first poem, "Starting from Paumanok," and he has kept the letter and the spirit of every promise therein made. We never see him doubtful or hesitating; we never see him battling for his territory, and uncertain whether or not he is upon his own ground. He has an air of contentment, of mastery and triumph, from the start.

His extraordinary self-estimate and self-awareness are equally noticeable. We should probably have to go back to sacred history to find a parallel case. The manner of man he was, his composite character, his relation to his country and times, his unlikeness to other poets, his affinity to the common people, how he would puzzle and elude his critics, how his words would itch at our ears till we understood them, etc., — how did he know all this from the first?

JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER

1834-1903

By GAMALIEL BRADFORD¹ (1866 —)

CHRONOLOGY

James (Abbott) McNeill Whistler.

Born, Lowell, Massachusetts, July 10, 1834.

In Russia, 1843-1848.

At West Point, 1851-1854.

Went to Paris to study, 1855.

Painted mainly in London and Paris till his death.

Ruskin trial, 1878.

Venice, 1879, 1880.

Married Beatrix (Philip) Godwin, August 11, 1888.

Wife died, May 10, 1896.

Died in London, July 17, 1903.

I

THE problem with Whistler is to reconcile a great artist with a little man; or, if not a little man, an odd man, an eccentric man, a curious, furious creature, who flitted through the world, making epigrams and enemies, beloved and hated, laughing and laughable, and painting great pictures. He was glorified by his hand and damned by his tongue.

The task of disentangling this snarled soul is made much more difficult by the perplexity of records. What little he himself wrote helps, so far as it goes. But it does not go far; and we have largely to deal with a cloud of legend, sometimes rosy, sometimes lurid, according to the reporter, but always obscuring and deceitful. Anecdotes are told in a dozen different ways, and there is seldom that care for verbal authenticity which is essential with a spirit at once so precise and so evasive. The chroniclers are baffling, when they mean to be helpful. The shrewd invent, the dull misapprehend. Take a single instance. One of the best-known Whistler stories is that of the answer to a lady who declared that there was no one like Whistler and Velasquez: "Madam, why drag in Velasquez?" An

¹ Reprinted from *American Portraits, 1875-1900*. Copyright, 1922, by Gamaliel Bradford. It is here used by permission of the author and of the publishers, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.

obsequious follower actually inquired of the Master, whether he really meant this. When they are subjected to such Boswells, who can blame the Doctor Johnsons and the Whistlers for running riot?

Whistler was born in Lowell, like other great men. He did not like it, would have preferred his mother's Southern dwelling-place, and sometimes implied that he was born in Baltimore. He declared in court that he was born in Saint Petersburg. He once said to an inquisitive model: "My child, I never was born. I came from on high"; and the model answered, with a frivolous impertinence that charmed him, "I should say you came from below." He was as reticent about his age as he was about his birthplace. But the hard fact is that he was born in Lowell in 1834. To be born in Lowell, to grow up in Russia, to be educated at West Point, to paint in France and England, with vague dashes to Venice and Valparaiso, and to die in London at seventy make a sufficiently variegated career. Even so, it was less variegated without than within.

Through the whole of it his life was in the pencil and brush, and the world to him was a world of line and colour. As a small child he drew in Russia and laughed at the painting of Peter the Great. At West Point he drew his instructors, mockingly. In the Coast Survey service he made exquisite official drawings — and odd faces on the margins of them. And, till he died, laughter and fighting may have been his diversions, but drawing and painting were his serious business.

The only serious one. Few human beings have taken less interest in the general affairs of men. Even for the other arts he had little thought to spare, except as they affected his own. Poetry did not touch him, unless an occasional jingle. Tragedy he found ludicrous. He liked to fetch analogies from music, but he knew nothing about it and cared nothing for it. When Sarasate was being painted and played for him, Whistler was fascinated with the flight of the bow up and down the strings. The music escaped him.

Apparently he read little, except to gratify a special fancy. He adored Poe. He read Balzac and the writers of that group. The Pennells insist that he must have read widely, because he had so much general information. Others say that he rarely touched a book. Probably the truth is that his reading was limited, but that a most retentive memory kept for ever anything that impressed him. However this may be, in all the records and biographies I have found little trace of his conversing or wishing to converse on ordinary topics of general interest.

To politics and the wide range of social questions he was utterly indifferent. He hated journalists because they talked about him and politicians because they did not. He praised America and things American at a distance, but American democracy would not have pleased him. In one sense he was democratic himself; for a street-sweeper who could draw would have interested him more than a British peer who only patronized art. "The Master was a Tory," says Mr. Menpes. "He did not quite

know why; but, he said, it seemed to suggest luxury; and painters, he maintained, should be surrounded with luxury. He loved kings and queens and emperors, and had a feeling that his work should only be bought by royalty."

With religion the attitude was about as elementary. Whistler dreaded death and avoided it and the thought of it. He believed in a future life and could not understand those people who did not. He even pushed this belief as far as spiritualism, took a lively interest in mediums and table-rappings and communications from the dead. Also, he had been brought up in a strict, almost Puritanic discipline, and the Bible had burned itself into his memory so that it coloured much of his utterance. But I do not find that religious emotion or reflection had any large place in his life. He was immensely busy in this world and left the next to take care of itself. God is occasionally mentioned in his writings, but very rarely, and then with kindness, but with little interest: "God, always good, though sometimes careless." In general, his religious tone is admirably conveyed by the anecdote of the dinner at which he listened in unusual silence to an animated and extensive discussion between representatives of various sects. At last Lady Burton turned to him and said, "And what are you, Mr. Whistler?" "I, madam?" he answered, using the word with which he would have liked to stop the mouths of all those who chattered about his own pursuit in life, "I, madam? Why, I am an amateur."

The same ignorance of the broader thought and movement of the world very naturally permeates Whistler's elaborate discussions of his own art. The theories of the celebrated "Ten O'Clock" lecture, that art is a casual thing, and cometh and goeth where it listeth, that the artist happens, that there are no artistic people or periods, and that art has nothing to do with history, are shrewd, apt, and, as a protest against pedantry, in many ways just. But they are incoherent and chaotic, more witty than philosophical, and more significant of Whistler than of truth. Above all, they are intimately related to the wide ignorance and indifference I have been commenting on. Whistler made much of his musical analogies. If he had thought a little more deeply on music, he might have used another or he might not. For music is indisputably and naturally what he always sought to make painting, the art of ignorance, the art, that is, which appeals directly to the emotions and does not require for its appreciation any wide training or experience in history or the general interests of human life. It is for this reason that music, even more than painting, seems destined to become the all-engrossing, all-devouring art of the future.

And as Whistler was indifferent to human concerns outside his art in a theoretical way, so he carried the same indifference into practical action. He lived to paint, or to talk about painting; all else was pastime, and most things hardly that. Money? He could sometimes drive a hard bargain, but it was a question of pride in his own work, not of meanness. Otherwise,

money slipped through his fingers, though in the early days there was little enough to slip. An artist should be comfortable, and bills were mundane things. So, while no one ever disputed his honesty of intention, he was apt to be in trouble. He was often poor and knew what privation was. But he never complained, and even when the bailiffs were in his house, he got gaiety and convenience out of them as much as ever Sheridan did. With time as with money. Exact hours and art had nothing to do with each other. What was punctuality? A virtue — or vice — of the bourgeoisie. If people invited him to dinner, he came when he pleased and dinner waited. If he invited them to breakfast at twelve, they might arrive at one and still hear him splashing in his bath behind the folding doors.

In all these varied phases of simplicity and sophistication what strikes me most is a certain childlikeness. The child is a naked man, and in many respects so was Whistler. The child clue accounts for many of his oddities and reconciles many of his contradictions. He thought some strange things; but above all, he said and did what he thought, as most of us do not. Take his infinite delight in his own work. What artist in any line does not feel it? But some conceal it more than Whistler. Gazing with rapt adoration at one of his pictures, he said to Keppel: "Now, isn't it beautiful?" "It certainly is," said Keppel. And Whistler: "No, but *isn't* it beautiful?" "It is, indeed," said Keppel. And Whistler again, "raising his voice to a scream, with a not too wicked blasphemy, and bringing his hand down upon his knee with a bang so as to give superlative emphasis to the last word of his sentence," "——it! isn't it *beautiful*?"

The child is the centre of his own universe, relates everything, good and evil, to himself, as does the man also in his soul. Whistler did it openly, triumphantly. His official biographers declare that they never heard him refer to himself in the third person; but they knew him only in later life and always managed to take a comparatively academic and decorous view of him. It is impossible to question Mr. Bacher's account of his referring to himself as Whistler, though there may be some exaggeration in it. Not I, but Whistler, did this or that. You must not find fault with the work or with the word of Whistler. Or again, it was the Master, as Mr. Menpes records it for us. "You do not realize what a privilege it is to be able to hand a cheque to the Master. You should offer it on a rich old English salver and in a kingly way." A good deal of mockery in it, of course, but an appalling deal of seriousness also. And note the curious coincidence of this obvious, self-asserting, third-personal egotism with the attempt of Henry Adams to avoid egotism in precisely the same manner.

Everywhere with Whistler there is the intense determination of the child to occupy the centre of the stage, no matter who is relegated to the wings. There is the sharp, vivid laugh, the screaming "Ha! Ha!" — a terror to his enemies, and something of a terror to his friends also. Not a bit of real merriment in it, but a trumpet assertion of Whistler's presence and

omnipresence. There is the extraordinary preoccupation with his own physical personality. In some respects no doubt he was handsome. A good authority declares that in youth he must have been "a pocket Apollo." At any rate, to use his pet word, he was always "amazing." The white lock, whether he came by it by inheritance or accident, what an ensign it was to blaze out the coming of the Master! Just so Tom Sawyer triumphed in his deleted front tooth. Read Mr. Menpes's remarkable account of Whistler at the barber's. What a sacred function, what a solemn rite, the cult of the lock, the cult of the Master's personality. At the tailor's it was the same. Every customer was called upon to give his opinion as to the fit of a coat, and the tailor was duly impressed with his almost priestly privilege: "You know, you must not let the Master appear badly clothed: it is your duty to see that I am well dressed."

What wonder that Mr. Chesterton affirms, though unjustly, that "the white lock, the single eye-glass, the remarkable hat — these were much dearer to him than any nocturnes or arrangements that he ever threw off. He could throw off the nocturnes; for some mysterious reason he could not throw off the hat." Milton was of the opinion that he who would be a great poet must make his own life a great poem. Whistler apparently thought that he who would be a great artist must make himself a great picture; but the picture he made was only what he detested most — the word and the thing — clever.

II

A large feature of the life of children is quarrelling. It certainly was a large feature of the life of Whistler. And we shall best understand his quarrels, if we think of him as a noisy, nervous, sharp-tongued, insolent boy. There have been plenty of other artists like him, alas! He has been compared to Cellini, and justly; and Vasari's accounts of Renaissance painters abound with rough words and silly or cruel deeds that might easily have been Whistler's. Byron's aristocratic impertinences show the same thing in literature, and Heine's noble and lovable traits were offset by abuse in the temper of a street ragamuffin.

Whistler liked flattery and adulation as a child does, and sought them with the candid subtlety which a child employs for the same object, witness the singular story of the arts and wiles with which the Master tried to win the affection of the ignorant fishermen of Saint Ives — without success.

As he liked compliments, so he resented criticism, especially if it did not come from a competent source; and a competent source was too apt to mean one that took Whistler's pre-eminence for granted. Criticism, sometimes reasonable, sometimes ignorant, sometimes really ill-natured and spiteful, was at the bottom of most of the riotous disagreements which long made the artist more conspicuous than his painting did. It is not necessary

to go into the details of all these unpleasant squabbles. The names of Ruskin, Wilde, Moore, Whistler's brother-in-law, Haden, and his patrons, Eden and Leyland, will sufficiently suggest them. Sometimes these adventures began with hostility. Sometimes friendship began them and hostility ended them. Sometimes Whistler appears madly angry, actually foaming at the mouth, says one observer, so that a fleck of foam was to be seen on his tie. Sometimes he chuckled and triumphed devilishly, with punctuations of the fierce and intiating "Ha! Ha!" Sometimes there was physical violence. Once the artist caught an antagonist washing his face in a club dressing-room, slipped up behind him, dashed his head down into the soapy water, and ran away gleefully, leaving the enemy to sputter and swear. Or the contest was more furious and more doubtful in outcome, as in the rough-and-tumble fights with Haden and Moore, in which each side asserted the victory. Of course such doings were disgusting and disgraceful, no matter how they resulted, and they should have been forgotten as speedily as might be.

But this was not Whistler's way. Instead, he gloated over every contest, whether verbal or muscular. He insulted his enemies and exalted their discomfiture in print, like a hero of Homer or a conceited boy. He wrote letter after letter to the papers, always so obligingly ready to help a great man expose himself. Then he collected the whole mass, including the replies of those who had been foolish enough to reply, into "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies," and flattered himself that he was a great author as well as a great painter.

Some people think he was. There is no doubt that he was a master of bitter words. His phrases have a casual ease of snapping and stinging that often scarifies and sometimes amazes. From his Puritan training and his extensive knowledge of the Bible, "that splendid mine of invective," as he characteristically called it, he drew a profusion of abuse, which withered, whether justifiable or not. And occasionally he was capable of great imaginative touches that recall his pictures.

But in general his writing is vexatious and, to say the least, undignified, the angry gabble of a gifted small boy, who ought to know better. The Wilde correspondence is perhaps the worst; but everywhere we get a tone of cheap railing. There is a careless vigor of sharp wit, but hardly the vituperative splendor of Voltaire or Swift. And it is such a small, such a shallow, such a supersensitive way of taking criticism; no urbanity, no serenity, no large, sweet, humorous acceptance of the inevitable chattering folly of the world. I do not see how any admirer of Whistler's positive genius can read "The Gentle Art" without sighing over the pity of it.

The pity of it is rather increased by his evident enjoyment. There was no real hatred at the bottom of his attacks. Mr. Chesterton insists that he tortured himself in torturing his enemies. This is rather too much of a tragic emphasis. He relieved his nervous irritability by slashing right

and left. But I do not know that there was much torture in it and there was a good deal of fun — of a kind. "I have been so absolutely occupied, what with working and fighting! — and you know how I like both." He did like fighting, and winning — or to make out that he won. In a charming phrase he describes himself as "delicately contentious." Again, he told the Pennells that "he could never be ill-natured, only wicked." The distinction is worthy of him, and is no doubt just, though perhaps not so self-complimentary as he thought it.

Moreover, in all his fights and quarrels, he liked and respected — possibly, as Du Maurier insinuates, — a little dreaded — those who stood up to him and answered back. If you dodged and cowered, he would pursue you remorselessly. If you gave him as good as he sent, he would laugh that shrill "Ha! Ha!" and let you go. Mark Twain visited him and was looking over his pictures. "Oh," cried Whistler, "don't touch that! Don't you see, it isn't dry?" "I don't mind," said Mark. "I have gloves on." From that moment they got along famously. When the artist was painting Lady Meux, he vexed and bothered and badgered her past endurance. Finally she snapped out, "See here, Jimmie Whistler! You keep a civil tongue in that head of yours, or I will have in some one to *finish* those portraits you have made of me." All Whistler could find to say was, "How *dare* you? How *dare* you?"

Also, his impishness, his strange, fantastic love of mischief prompted him to scenes and touches of Aristophanic, Mephistophelian comedy, sometimes laughable and sometimes repulsive. There is a Renaissance cruelty about his remark, when told that the architect who originally designed the Peacock Room had gone mad on seeing Whistler's alterations, "To be sure, that is the effect I have upon people." There is more of the ridiculous, but also much of the bitter, in his own wonderful account of his revenging himself upon Sir William Eden by spoiling the auction sale of his pictures: "I walked into the big room. The auctioneer was crying 'Going! Going! Thirty shillings! Going!' 'Ha! Ha!' I laughed — not loudly, not boisterously — it was very delicately, very neatly done. But the room was electrified. Some of the henchmen were there; they grew rigid, afraid to move, afraid to glance my way out of the corners of their eyes. 'Twenty shillings! Going!' the auctioneer would cry. 'Ha! Ha!' I would laugh, and things went for nothing and the henchmen trembled."

Moralizing comment on all these wild dealings and doings of Whistler is perhaps superfluous and inappropriate. It would certainly have caused boundless glee to Whistler himself. Yet one may be permitted to point out how easy it is, after all, to be disagreeable and how little real cleverness it requires. Most of us devote our best efforts to avoiding instead of achieving it. And then how often we fail! Even to be disagreeably witty it not always a triumph of genius. Any tongue can sting, and the unthinking are always ready enough to mistake stinging for wit. Much of Whistler's

recorded talk and signed writing irresistibly suggests Doctor Johnson's saying about Cibber: "Taking from his conversation all that he ought not to have said, he was a poor creature."

It is the same with the gentle art of making enemies. Most of us require no art for it, being admirably gifted by nature in that direction. The art of making friends is a difficult one, especially that of keeping them after they are made. It is easy to ridicule friendship. A lady once asked Whistler: "Why have you withered people and stung them all your life?" He answered: "My dear, I will tell you a secret. Early in life I made the discovery that I was charming; and if one is delightful, one has to thrust the world away to keep from being bored to death." And he dedicated "The Gentle Art" to "The rare Few, who, early in Life, have rid Themselves of the Friendship of the Many." The irony is obvious enough, and it is equally obvious that Whistler was referring to the casual friendships of the world, which do not deserve the name. At the same time, the art, or the gift, or the instinct, of drawing men to you is worth more, to the artist or the Philistine, than that of repelling them. In studying Whistler one cannot but think of such an opposite type as Longfellow, who, without effort, almost without thought, and still keeping an individuality as sturdy and more manly than Whistler's, made himself lovable and beloved by everybody. Or, if Longfellow as an artist is not thought worthy the comparison, take Raphael, of whom Vasari tells us that a power was "accorded to him by Heaven of bringing all who approached his presence into harmony, an effect inconceivably surprising in our calling and contrary to the nature of artists." And again, "All harsh and evil dispositions became subdued at the sight of him; every base thought departing from the mind before his influence. . . . And this happened because he surpassed all in friendly courtesy as well as in art." I am inclined to think that such praise would be worth more to Whistler's memory a hundred years hence than "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies."

III

So, having got rid of the too abundant negative traits, let us turn to Whistler's attraction and charm. He was a man of contradictions, says Mr. Van Dyke; and the frivolous mischief-maker lived side by side with a thoughtful, earnest, even lofty-souled artist.

The child clue will stay with us, as before. Those who knew Whistler best frequently recur to it: "When off his guard, he was often a pathetic kid." The childlike candour rarely failed, not only in asserting merits, but even in recognizing defects: "He was the most absolutely truthful man about himself that I ever met. I never knew him to hide an opinion or a thought — nor to try to excuse an action." And with the candour in professing opinions went a high and energetic courage in defending

them, a courage that was sometimes blatant and tactless, but seems to have been genuine, even to the point of admitting its own failures. When Mr. Menpes said to him, "Of course you don't know what fear is?" Whistler answered, "Ah, yes! I do. I should hate, for example, to be standing opposite a man who was a better shot than I, far away out in the forest in the bleak, cold morning. Fancy I, the Master, standing out in the open as a target to be shot at!"

In general human relations it would be a mistake to suppose that Whistler was always thorny, prickly, biting and stinging. His biographers insist upon his gaiety. Mr. Chesterton must have been right. True gaiety not only does not wound, but cannot bear the thought of having wounded; and such was not Whistler. Though he chose the butterfly emblem, his nature had not the butterfly's light and careless saturation of sunshine. But it is true that he loved human society and did not like to be alone, even wanting people about him when he worked. He could use his wit to charm and fascinate as well as to punish. Whenever he took part in conversation, he led it and deserved to lead it. Hear this account of his appearance in a crowded club-room: "Speaking simply in a quiet way to myself, without once looking round, Whistler would draw every man in that club to his side — smart young men about town, old fogies, retired soldiers, who had been dozing in armchairs." And men not only listened to him, they loved him — when they did not hate him. "Whistler could be gentle, sweet, sympathetic, almost feminine, so lovable was he." He inspired deep attachments, which could be broken only by the rude knocks that he too well knew how to give them. He was gentle and patient with servants, and there is no better proof of simple goodness and kindness.

For women he seems always to have had a peculiar regard, though the records of his relations with them are naturally not abundant. His Southern training and habits gave him a rather unusual formal courtesy towards them and many witnesses insist upon what is somewhat curious in consideration of his wit and comic instinct and his distinctly irregular life, that he never uttered and never tolerated grossness. Two attachments to women, at any rate, played a large part in his career. He adored his mother and obeyed her in his youth. He adored her and watched over her in his riper years. Although he resented any critical suggestion of sentiment in his portrait of her, he confided to a friend, speaking very slowly and softly, "Yes — yes — one does like to make one's mummy just as nice as possible." When he was over fifty, he stumbled upon a marriage, fortuitous as most other external events in his life; but the marriage was singularly happy; he adored his wife as he had his mother, and her death shattered him in a way to confute those who denied him human tenderness.

When it comes to art, Whistler's admirable qualities are questioned by no one. His devotion to it from youth to age was perfect and unflinching.

It was not perhaps so devouring and morbid a passion as with some, but it was a constant flame, which burned steadily through all difficulty and all discouragement. It was enlightened and intelligent also, directed from the beginning with firm and close discipline towards a definite object. Not that the difficulties and discouragements did not come. In spite of his confidence and belief in himself, there were times, as with all artists, when things went bitterly, hopelessly wrong: "No one," says Mr. Gay, "can realize, who has not watched Whistler paint, the agony his work gave him. I have seen him after a day's struggle with a picture, when things did not go, completely collapse, as from an illness." And one should read Mr. Menpes's strange account of nervous excitement, on the very eve of an exhibition, over a mouth that was not right and could not be made right: "He became nervous and sensitive. The whole exhibition seemed to centre on that one mouth. It developed into a nightmare. At length, in despair, he dashed it out with turpentine, and fled from the gallery just as the first critic was entering."

As these efforts and struggles show, no matter how much Whistler may have attitudinized in life, in art he was sincere and genuine. If you took him quietly by himself, you could not but feel this. "As a matter of fact," says Mr. Van Dyke, "he was almost always in a serious mood, and, with his knowledge and gift of language, talked most sensibly and persuasively." His actions showed sincerity far more than his talk. Though he was careless about money, spent much of it and would have liked to spend more, and believed that he could have done better work if he had had more to spend, he never sacrificed one line of his ideals for any earthly payment. "It is better to live on bread and cheese and paint beautiful things than to live like Dives and paint pot-boilers," he said; and he meant it and acted on it always.

Also, he was sincere enough to accept criticism and profit by it, when it came from a proper source and in a proper spirit. He once asked a great sculptor what he thought of a portrait. The sculptor, after some hesitation, merely pointed out that one leg was longer than the other. Whistler's friends expected an outburst. Instead, he remarked quietly: "You are quite right. I had not observed the fault, and I shall correct it in the morning." Afterward he added, "What an eye for line a sculptor has!"

And, as he was ready to submit to intelligent criticism of his own painting, so he was equally quick to acknowledge merit in others, provided it was really there. He praised the work of students and fellow-artists with swift and discerning kindness, if it seemed to him praiseworthy. But pretence and shallow cleverness he withered wherever he found them.

His capacity for labour, for continuous and prolonged painstaking, was limitless. Because he concealed this and pretended to work lightly and casually, people thought him idle, but he was not. Industry, he said, was an absolute necessity, not a virtue, and a picture, when finished, should

show no trace of the labour that had produced it: "Work alone will efface the footsteps of work." In fact it was only in age that he discovered that he had never done anything but work. "It struck me that I had never rested, that I had never done nothing, that it was the one thing I needed." He could not tolerate laziness in himself or in others. In his house there were no armchairs, and to a friend who complained of this he said, "If you want to rest, you had better go to bed." But his friends and pupils did not want to rest when he was with them. "Whistler invariably inspired people to work," says one who knew him well. The sittings for his portraits were prolonged and repeated, till the sitters' patience was utterly exhausted, and some of them complained that the intensity of his effort seemed to draw the very life out of them. In short, those who judge him by his quarrels and his bickerings and his flippancy and his odd clothes get no idea of the deep, conscientious earnestness of the artist. He worked till death to produce beautiful things. A year before he died, he insisted with passionate simplicity and sincerity: "I would have done anything for my art." To the end he was looking forward and there are few finer expressions of the ardour of creation than his noble phrase, "an artist's career always begins tomorrow."

IV

It is not my business to discuss Whistler's art as such. But as the general's soul is revealed in his battles and the preacher's in his sermons, so in his pictures we must seek the painter's, and the biographer must consider work as well as words.

It appears, then, that in Whistler's art, there are two marked elements which, taken together, help largely to elucidate his spirit. The first of these is the element of truth, precision, exactitude, showing more conspicuously in the etchings, but never neglected in any of his work at any time. As he himself said of the Thames series of etchings: "There, you see, all is sacrificed to exactness of outline."

This instinct of truth, of reality, should be closely related to the more external facts of Whistler's life. In combination with the childlike simplicity and openness, it entered largely into his everlasting quarrels. He did not quarrel in Paris — that is, not abnormally. But all the artist in him, all the truth-lover, revolted against the conventions of English Philistinism, and he fought them, whether critical or social, with all the passion that was in him. "The wit of Whistler . . . was the result of intense personal convictions as to the lines along which art and life move together," says one of his most intelligent biographers. As applied to life, this instinct of truth in him was mainly destructive, and did little good to him or others; but it was obscurely lofty in aim and it was an integral part of his better nature.

In art, on the other hand, the destructive instinct led at once to con-

struction. Here, too, indeed, there was the perpetual, deadly war on sham. Whistler saw all around him, in painting as in poetry, the Victorian excess of sentiment. The "heart interest" was what counted and execution was a minor matter. The *Angelus* and "*Evangeline*" would make a world-wide reputation, whether the workmanship was supreme or not. Against this heresy of the subject Whistler was in perpetual revolt. He did not sufficiently realize that a great artist may treat a great subject, though it too often happens that to the vulgar eye a great subject may transfigure a mean conception and a vulgar handling. He wanted to shake art free from all these adjuncts of theme and historical association and historical development and concentrate the artist's whole effort on the pure ecstasy of line and colour. He pushed this so far as to revel in mere decorative richness, feeding and filling his eye and imagination with the azure and golden splendours of the Peacock Room.

But, of course, if you had pushed him home, he would have admitted that in the end all beauty must be related to human emotion, vague suggestions and intimations of subtle feeling, all the more overpowering because indefinite. And the real purpose of getting rid of a distinct, trite subject was to allow these essential emotions richer play. Music, in which he so often sought analogy, would have given it to him in this point also. For the most elaborate orchestral symphony depends as fundamentally on human emotion for its significance as does the simplest air. And Bach and Wagner open realms of feeling equally deep, though widely different. The most original and suggestive part of Whistler's painting, if not the greatest, is that which enters most into this vast and uncharted region of intangible emotion. Of all things he loved to paint night, and what in the wide world is more throbbing with imaginative depths? "Subject, sentiment, meaning were for him in the night itself—the night in its loveliness and mystery."

Here we seize the second cardinal element in Whistler's work, the element of mystery. What characterizes his range of vague emotion is not passion, not melancholy, but just the sense of mystery, of the indefinable, the impalpable. It is singular how all the critics, whatever their point of view, unite in distinguishing this, something vague, something elusive, some hidden, subtle suggestion which cannot be analyzed or seized in words. It is naturally more marked in the nocturnes and similar paintings, but it is perfectly appreciable also in the portraits and in the etchings, the handling of backgrounds and accessories, the delicate, evasive gradation of tints and shades. As Huysmans puts it, "these phantom portraits, which seem to shrink away, to sink into the wall, with their enigmatic eyes."

And note that the two elements must work together to produce their full effect. It is the intense impression of definiteness, of clearness, the extraordinary realistic emphasis on one salient point, that doubles the surrounding suggestion of mystery. In the secret of making precision, vivid

definition, enhance and redouble the obscure. Whistler shows his debt to Poe in an overwhelming degree. But there is another influence that may have affected Whistler in this regard, and that is Russia. I cannot find that any critic or biographer has suggested this. Yet the artist passed the most impressionable part of his youth in Russia. His eyes, his ears, his heart were wide open all that time. Not only Russian painting, but Russian music and Russian feeling must have passed into them. He must have touched the Orient there as he did later through Japan. And surely the essence of Russian art is in just this union of intense, bald realism with the most subtle, far-reaching suggestion of the unlimited, the unexplored, the forever unknown. Russia is childhood intensely sophisticated. And so was Whistler.

It is curious to reflect that the combination in Whistler of the most lucid, direct, energetic intelligence with the complete general ignorance I have noted earlier led to exactly this result, of the vivid blending of precision with mystery. Clear-sighted and observant as he was, there is no sense of modern life in him, no portrayal of the quick, active, current movement of the contemporary world, no such portrayal of any world. The intelligence seems to clarify simply for the purpose of obscuring. The total result of the age-long development of such a magnificent instrument as human reason, as Whistler illustrates it, is to stultify itself, to show with blinding flashes the boundless region of impenetrable shadow. And in this phase of Whistler's art, nothing is more symbolical and suggestive than the nocturnes with fireworks. The glare of the falling rocket makes the involving darkness oppress you with a negative visibility that is maddening.

It is in view of this union of intense intellectual clearness with mystery that we must read all Whistler's perplexing remarks about nature. Nature was crude multiplicity. To the unseeing eye, to the unaided imagination she would not yield her secret or tell her story. It was the artist's business and his triumph to select, to isolate, to emphasize, to co-ordinate, so as to suggest the emotion he wished to convey, no other and no more. Here, again, the parallel of music would have illustrated better than any analysis of painting. Every sound that music uses is given in nature, but given in a vast and tangled disorder which, to a sensitive ear, results as often in pain as in pleasure. The musician's genius brings this chaos into an ordered scheme of harmonized delight. To Whistler's artistic instinct the final and perfect triumph of human intelligence was the transforming of confusion into mystery.

Many have been puzzled by Whistler's dislike of the country and even abuse of it. The explanation is simple. In the first place, he had never lived in the country. His experience of it was the tourist's, and nature to the tourist is a mere panoramic display, a succession of vulgar excitements from an ever higher mountain or deeper sea. Nature to the tourist is scenery, not feeling. This is what Whistler meant when he returned from a visit to

the English lakes and said that the mountains "were all little round hills with little round trees out of a Noah's ark"; when he complained in general that there were too many trees in the country, and even grumbled to a friend, who urged the glory of the stars, "there's too many of them." If he had grown up with an exquisite threshold beauty, such as hovers in the lovely lines of Cowper,

*Scenes that soothed
Or charmed me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing and of power to charm me still,*

his brush would have drawn out the charm as few had ever done before. But he dwelt in cities. Huge casual doses of nature first surfeited and then starved him. Moreover he held, it may be justly, that the deepest fountains of mystery are not even wide fields and quiet skies, but the human eye and the human heart.

It is needless to say that the theory of mystery as I have elaborated it — perhaps too subtly — is not explicit in any writing or recorded speech of Whistler himself. When one has it in mind, however, there is a curious interest in catching the notes and echoes of it in his own words. Thus, in practical matters, take his remark to one who commented on the unfinished condition of Whistler's dwelling. "You see, I do not care for settling down anywhere. Where there is no more space for improvement, or dreaming about improvement, where mystery is in perfect shape, it is *finis* — the end — death. There is no hope, nor outlook left." Or take the same instinct in a more artistic connexion. "They talk about the blue skies of Italy, — the skies of Italy are not blue, they are black. You do not see blue skies except in Holland and here, where you get great white clouds, and then the spaces between are blue! and in Holland there is atmosphere, and that means mystery. There is mystery here, too, and the people don't want it. What they like is when the east wind blows, when you can look across the river and count the wires in the canary bird's cage on the other side." Finally, take the wonderful words about painting in the twilight, full of mystery and vague suggestion as a poem of Shelley: "As the light fades and the shadows deepen, all the petty and exacting details vanish; everything trivial disappears, and I can see things as they are, in great, strong masses; the buttons are lost, but the garment remains; the garment is lost, but the sitter remains; the sitter is lost, but the shadow remains. And that, night cannot efface from the painter's imagination." Even allowing for the touch of Whistler's natural irony, such a view of art seems to amend Gautier's celebrated phrase into "I am a man for whom the *invisible* world exists," and to give double emphasis to the lines of Keats,

*Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter.*

So we find in Whistler, as we found implicit in Mark Twain and Sidney Lanier and explicit in Henry Adams, the immense and overwhelming heritage of ignorance which the nineteenth century transmitted to the twentieth. But whereas Mark erected ignorance into a dogmatic religion of negation, and Adams trifled with it, and Lanier battled with it, Whistler drew out of it the enduring solace of artistic effort, and applied to its persistent torment the immortal, divine recipe for cure of headache, heartache, soul-ills, body-ills, poverty, ignominy, contempt, neglect, and pain, the creation, or even the attempted creation, of things beautiful.

PRINCE OTTO VON BISMARCK

1815-1898

By EMIL LUDWIG¹ (1883 —)



Earthly majesty is always akin to the fallen angel, who is proud and unhappy, beautiful but troubled, and whose plans and efforts, though vast, are denied success.

POWERFUL frame! How much was Bismarck indebted to his physique, although he hardly ever came to actual tests of fist and muscle! His body and his accomplishments were identical: the will of a giant vibrant with the electric charge of magnetic nerves. He was like those mastiffs of his which, precisely because of this resemblance, he loved: strong and nervous, heavy and sombre, formidable and unrelenting towards an offender — loyal to but one person, his master, yet devoted to him until death. Bismarck was as powerful, as nervous, and as dangerous as his dogs.

Like every strong man, he once saved his own life. An assassin in Unter den Linden had fired one shot at him and was about to fire a second, this time at closer range. It would have been fatal, had not Bismarck seized the man's right hand and hurled the weapon to the ground. On another occasion, when he was younger, he had plunged into the water after a man who was drowning — and for the rest of his life, among all the insignia of honor which "go with the make-up of a minister," he took pride only in the medal commemorating this rescue. Again, he saved Prussia, when the king was about to yield to popular pressure and to abdicate, by taking hold of the king's scabbard and literally shaking him into a mood of self-defence.

None of these three equally important acts would have been possible without the assistance of his powerful physique. Wherever he went, he was the biggest man present. At a court ball, when he was in his twenties, his stature elicited the admiration of his first master. Emperors of the French and of the Russians, kings, princes, and princesses — all were impressed to see him stoop as he came through the door and then draw himself up again to his full height. Generals and politicians, most of them

¹ Reprinted from *Genius and Character*, translated from the German by Kenneth Burke. Copyright 1927 by Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., who publish the volume in the United States. Here used by permission of the American publishers and that of Jonathan Cape, the English publisher.

his opponents for one reason or another, were often astounded, and even terrified, by his build.

And yet his intimates, and sometimes mere government clerks, had seen the giant collapse, convulsed with weeping, tortured with despair, his features twitching and distorted. This is the other side of Bismarck, an aspect of him which the Germans readily gloss over, but without which the nationalistic side of his character could never have been effectual.

For while the spirit of history was still undecided whether or not to unite the German race after a thousand years of dissent, it produced a man whose own impulses were so rent that he alone was capable of coping with this other division. His own personal struggle, a restless oscillation between pathos and criticism, duty and power, flight and aggression, loyalty and vengeance, had its parallel for him in the condition of Germany; and this almost mystical, yet natural kinship gave him both the desire and the courage to battle for national integration. Almost unknown to himself, a powerful stream of emotion was flowing beneath the craftiness of the politician. This produced a vision, a kind of dream, which gave him consistency of purpose despite the seeming opportunism of his methods. And he could work only at white heat: rapidly, in barely eight years, Bismarck the Prussian forged Germany.

For Germany could not be subdued except by a man of emotion, who, like the artist, was capable of casting his molten feelings into forms of solid iron. It was really an artist who shaped this realm of music into a state.

But he was also a realist; for this same soil nourishes a race of realists who attempt to balance their weakness for reverie and philosophy by a deliberate propulsion towards externals — their cult of action being, probably through fear, exaggerated into wariness. Bismarck was hard and realistic, with a keen sense of cold facts and an almost total indifference to principles. All during his thirty years of steadily mounting power, and even at the last when he was a dictator, he would ally himself with any party or any platform and oppose any party or any platform, purely as the occasion demanded. He hated passionately, lying awake far into the night. And the next day he would shatter his opponents like a bolt of lightning. But the very moment he had need of them, he would reverse his tactics and become conciliatory. It is absurd to ask just how far such a policy was pursued in the interests of his cause and how far in the interests of his personal power: for this man was a monomaniac who cared for no cause but his own and who felt that he alone could properly defend it!

Nevertheless Bismarck's *primum mobile* was neither the will to power nor the desire for fame — as to witness his long period of aimlessness in youth. At the age of thirty-five, when Bismarck the noble was taking his first steps into politics, Napoleon the parvenu was already emperor. He did not settle upon this career through any desire to be a dictator, nor

any theoretical love for a fatherland which did not yet exist, nor through pride in Prussia, his more immediate home. But when he took trowel in hand and began laying stone upon stone, he was moved by the true artist's wish to produce order out of chaos, to give form to the formless — and along with this went a sound and thorough-going misanthropy which led him to ridicule the failures of his predecessors.

The German genius has always been either ideologist or artist. This people has never produced the pure *homo politicus*.

For this reason he was all the more violent in his opposition to the ideologists. He had little enough respect for philosophy, but he positively despised the pedants of the Frankfort variety, who had insisted, while the country ran riot, on examining in the light of ultimate philosophical principles every proposition laid before the assembly. A landowner from the Pomeranian back-country, he placed a low value on city-bred intellectuals and professional men. He was self-taught, a political primitive; he stepped abruptly into the arena without previous experience or training, and also, of course, without party prejudices. Stammeringly, he hurled his doctrine of German unity at the astonished ranks of the diet until the king had singled him out. What could attract a sickly dreamer like Frederick William to this uncouth giant except that obscure element above and beyond the intellect which they had in common? Did this stranger arrive from his provincial estate with a fully worked-out plan of action? On the contrary, he had nothing but the vaguest notion of what he wanted, nothing but courage and the mutterings of anger.

For there was a heavy cargo of courage in this powerful hulk: a proud self-consciousness formed the ballast for a vessel shaken with antinomies, and this alone assured it of a voyage without mishap. Bismarck's first word to a king was a rebuke, as was also his last: March '48, March '90. When not fighting, he was hardly more than a misanthrope and a scoffer: his great energies were drained by doubt, cynicism, and melancholy. But the presence of an enemy restored them to unity, converted them into action and purpose, and gave him self-reliance by providing an external force against which his self-reliance could be directed. And the nearer an enemy, the keener his capacity for action. He fought with a deeper devotion in domestic issues than against a foreign foe. Bismarck hated the German politicians Windthorst and Richter, but not Napoleon.

At bottom Bismarck was a thorough revolutionary. His first appearance as he came out of the oak forests of his birthplace and threw himself with fury into the narrow machinations of party politics; his attitude towards the kings and princes of his own country, and later towards foreign kings and emperors; the bold and simple "No" which he hurled at the political maxims of his times; his insistence upon ruling without interference from

others; his continual threat of resigning; the splendid clarity, informality, and newness of his diction — all these defiant traits of a freedom-loving temperament belong to a man who, had he been born of the submerged classes, would have advanced behind the red flag.

He was not like Goethe, who needed order to encompass his own chaos: he was disharmonic through and through, neither resting nor wanting rest. For it is not ideas, but emotions, which make the revolutionary; and the man who champions tradition with a fresh and terrorizing passionateness is often more revolutionary than a man who fights tradition with a calm pen or among the ranks of the many.

In reality, Bismarck created a new form of politics, in Germany at least. He revolutionized the methods of dealing with popular rebellions, founded the new school of diplomatic practice which openly struck terror instead of employing flattery and craft as in the school of Metternich. After a dinner in London, when he had outlined his program with astounding firmness, Disraeli, who saw him in the true perspective, said to his guests: "Take care of that man, he means what he says."

With these strong impulses to break the bonds of custom, with so much courage and self-reliance, such forcefulness and scorn — what kept him faithful to the old forms? What led him to decide socially against the future? What linked him with dynasties which had already begun to lose their meaning?

His blood. When he was being trained in the hunt, the old woodsman whose great-grandfather had served a Bismarck in the time of young Freddy called the boy "Herr Junker." He saw the inadequacy of his class, their degeneration and idleness, the futility and mismanagement with which many of his cousins fulfilled their inherited offices; and he saw the intelligence, industry, and pride of common citizens triumph over the mummified prejudices of the nobility — yet he constituted himself the guardian of his class and summoned his genius to its defence.

Above all else he defended the king. Not that he considered the king's blood to be better than his own: for more than once he told the Hohenzollern to their faces that the Bismarcks had tenanted the realm longer than they. But he saw in the king the apex of a pyramid which, if truncated, would seem odd, and perhaps even ludicrous. He was unwilling to imperil the hereditary prerogatives of his name; like the usual noble, the usual landowner, he was loath to relinquish any worldly possessions for theoretical reasons; he could never divorce himself from this sense of superiority which found its sanction in the very force of character behind it — and thus he gave unto the king that which was the king's.

For his house still flourished with manly vigour; the nihilism of an age of increasing transvaluations had not yet broken through his feudalistic

code; and tradition was still powerful enough to extend its influence when aided by so faithful a scion. It seems as though this *Junker* inherited absolutely nothing from his mother, he was so totally lacking in any evidence of her bourgeois blood. Fifty years later — and Bismarck, with his temperament and will power, his fearlessness and independence, would have been a leader of the new era.

Thus he remained all his life a royalist, and grounded his work on dynasties. He himself asserted that his loyalty to the king was purely the result of his faith in God, yet this faith was forced to take strange shapes. He was a Protestant, highly unmystical, inveterately rationalistic. For years, up to the day of his death, he kept a prayer-book lying on his night-table; it was interleaved with blank sheets on which he jotted down the political ideas that came to him at night: truly a Bismarckian species of devotion.

In any case, no such transcendental reasons prompted him to show the least respect for other princes, and especially other German ones, even though they too felt that they ruled by divine right. On the contrary, he was scornful and heaped irony upon their heads. In the whole line of Prussian kings he loved no one, not even the great Frederick — and he cared still less for the rulers under whom he himself had served. But he was bound to them by a feeling for feudal ties which must have been handed down through many generations, since blood alone can explain it. The noble granted fealty to his king through expecting fealty of his vassals. So great was the love of freedom in this revolutionary temperament.

The relationship always remained essentially one of equal to equal. And while he always observed the formalities, signing himself "most humbly" or "most obediently," he eyed the conduct of his master with suspicion and bit the golden chain when he felt its pressure.

At last he even bit the master's hand — and nothing shows Bismarck's latent revolutionary tendencies more clearly than the way he rose up at the first provocation against the one authority he had recognized, the king. The significant fact is not his going, but his way of going: every detail of this drama, in which a powerful old man was called upon to comply with the arbitrary wishes of a weak young sovereign, points to the imperiousness, the intransigence, and the thorough independence of his character. The hereditary nobility of his blood provided a rigid code which would not permit him to conceive of his work in terms of the German people rather than in terms of Prussian kings. But nothing, not even the faith he paraded so readily, could hinder another kind of nobility, the nobility of his temperament, from defying a prince by God's grace exactly as the young idiot deserved.

At times in the past he had ventured cautious criticisms or had, though always with the bearing of the liegeman, openly voiced objections when behind closed doors. But now, aroused like a mastiff, he broke into a

rage against the master who had struck him unjustly. Bismarck's fall disclosed impulses which his inherited code had kept concealed for years. Only the lack of a great opponent, and the legend which the Germans built up around the mere pretext of a reconciliation, have been able to obscure for a time the violence of this outburst.

Yet even now he winced at the thought of open rebellion. Was youth all that this old man of seventy-five needed? Or were his royalist leanings still an unsurmountable obstacle? In any case, he did not go beyond farewell tirades in which he fired disturbing truths point-blank at his king and the other princes. Then he retired in fury to his den, hurling out stones which cracked the dilapidated royal masonry.

But the steel edifice of the state remained standing. For twenty-eight years Bismarck had governed; twenty-eight years after he was gone the old dynastic system collapsed — and Germany's enemies watched to see the entire structure fall into ruins.

But it held! Not a stone, except those which the enemy extracted, was loosened. Indeed, at the very height of calamity, skillful hands were at work making the pillars more solid than before. And it now became evident that whereas most Germans had revered the royalty as the very foundation of the empire, it had been merely a brilliant but unnecessary façade.

The survival of the state is the surest evidence that the important part which Bismarck assigned to royalty in his political scheme was purely a concession to his class — one might almost call it a weakness. For as the ruling houses fell and the empire endured, Bismarck's precautions for the future, despite all their baggage of tradition, were justified by their results. After the tempest, people looked about them and saw that the man who had done this was much more modern than he himself had ever hoped to be.

When the empire was founded at Versailles, amidst the medieval roar of victorious cannon, the golden mirrors in the Glass Gallery of the palace reflected only the forms of warlike princes; the industrious masses were elsewhere. When in the same hall forty-eight years later the empire was sentenced to atone and pay for its defeat, the golden mirrors no longer reflected a single royal figure. The last three emperors of Europe had been slain or deposed. Twenty-two German dynasties had been deprived of power — not by compulsion from without, hardly even by the natives themselves, but by corrosion, by the rust of an era which had served its purposes and was now ready for death.

Yet the documents which two humble citizens were called upon to sign at that momentous hour did not involve the destruction of Bismarck's work, but only of the work of William the Second. It was William who had fostered, and Bismarck who had opposed, all those policies which eventually involved Germany in war. Foreign colonies and a marine were

typical instances of all that the founder of the state had *not* wanted. Had he really raised the empire on the point of a victorious sword? Or had he not, rather, employed the sword purely as a means of overcoming Europe's resistance to German unity? Did he not, for twenty years thereafter, resist all the temptations of imperialism, all the enticements of militaristic expansion? And was it not Bismarck who, braving the anger of the king and all the generals at Nikolsburg, created the prototype of a modern peace: without cession of territory, without indemnity, dictated solely by the desire to restore friendly relations with the enemy as quickly as possible? Was Bismarck really of the past?

At the end he broods, despite protestations of homage, alone and in exile. When he is nearly eighty, and people try to argue him into the tranquillity proper to his years, he looks at them from under his bushy eyebrows and asks, "And why should I be tranquil?" The wife is gone upon whom he had lavished all the warmth which he repressed in his frigid dealings with the outer world. This woman had been his haven of retreat. All the yearnings for quiet, woodland, and home which troubled this restless, knotty character were embodied in her — even though his equally strong love of executive activity and political organization always kept him occupied in the service of the state. The more turbulent his career, the more peaceful his marriage had to be — and was.

He had a critical mind which readily turned to history and to literary composition; and he was by nature a woodsman and a huntsman, a rustic who resented all officialdom. His sojourns in the country, which he had accepted in his youth without thinking, were deliberately protracted in later years — for it was here that he derived the strength to breathe in ministerial chambers, in the closets of a castle, and in the halls of a parliament which he despised. This antinomy between the scene of his activity and the landscape of his heart never ended, for it was merely the symbol of a chronic indecision; and when, at the last, he had full leisure to enjoy the silence of his forests, he longed to be back in the turmoil which he had cursed for years.

This was his human lot. Bismarck was not happy by nature, and he knew it.

But he accepted life like a man, did his work with substantial materials, saw the vision of his thirties realized in his sixties, and for ten full years could look upon himself as the arbiter of the Continent. Yet he could never rid himself of the fear that all this might vanish overnight if he were not there — and in his last weeks his daughter heard him praying aloud for the future of Germany.

In a long coat, and a wide hat, peering out grimly like a Wotan, he could be seen, at the end, among the prehistoric oaks of his forests, walking about slowly and alone, between two mastiffs.

HECTOR BERLIOZ

1803-1869

By ROMAIN ROLLAND¹ (1866 —)



It may seem a paradox to say that no musician is so little known as Berlioz. The world thinks it knows him. A noisy fame surrounds his person and his work. Musical Europe has celebrated his centenary. Germany disputes with France the glory of having nurtured and shaped his genius. Russia, whose triumphal reception consoled him for the indifference and enmity of Paris, has said, through the voice of Balakirew, that he was "the only musician France possessed." His chief compositions are often played at concerts; and some of them have the rare quality of appealing both to the cultured and the crowd; a few have even reached great popularity. Works have been dedicated to him, and he himself has been described and criticized by many writers. He is popular even to his face; for his face, like his music, was so striking and singular that it seemed to show you his character at a glance. No clouds hide his mind and its creations, which, unlike Wagner's, need no initiation to be understood; they seem to have no hidden meaning, no subtle mystery; one is instantly their friend or their enemy, for the first impression is a lasting one.

That is the worst of it; people imagine that they understand Berlioz with so very little trouble. Obscurity of meaning may harm an artist less than a seeming transparency; to be shrouded in mist may mean remaining long misunderstood, but those who wish to understand will at least be thorough in their search for the truth. It is not always realized how depth and complexity may exist in a work of clear design and strong contrasts — in the obvious genius of some great Italian of the Renaissance as much as in the troubled heart of a Rembrandt and the twilight of the North.

That is the first pitfall; but there are many more that will beset us in the attempt to understand Berlioz. To get at the man himself one must break down a wall of prejudice and pedantry, of convention and intellectual snobbery. In short, one must shake off nearly all current ideas about his work if one wishes to extricate it from the dust that has drifted about it for half a century.

¹ Reprinted from *Musicians of Today*, translated from the French by Mary Blaiklock, by permission of the publishers, Kegan, Paul, French, Trübner & Co., Ltd., London, and Henry Holt & Co., New York. First published in London in 1908.

Above all, one must not make the mistake of contrasting Berlioz with Wagner, either by sacrificing Berlioz to that Germanic Odin, or by forcibly trying to reconcile one to the other. For there are some who condemn Berlioz in the name of Wagner's theories; and others who, not liking the sacrifice, seek to make him a forerunner of Wagner, or kind of elder brother, whose mission was to clear a way and prepare a road for a genius greater than his own. Nothing is fals^{er}. To understand Berlioz one must shake off the hypnotic influence of Bayreuth. Though Wagner may have learnt something from Berlioz, the two composers have nothing in common; their genius and their art are absolutely opposed; each one has ploughed his furrow in a different field.

The Classical misunderstanding is quite as dangerous. By that I mean the clinging to superstitions of the past, and the pedantic desire to enclose art within narrow limits, which still flourish among critics. Who has not met the censors of music? They will tell you with solid complacency how far music may go, and where it must stop, and what it may express and what it must not. They are not always musicians themselves. But what of that? Do they not lean on the example of the past? The past! a handful of works that they themselves hardly understand. Meanwhile, music, by its unceasing growth, gives the lie to their theories, and breaks down these weak barriers. But they do not see it, do not wish to see it; since they cannot advance themselves, they deny progress. Critics of this kind do not think favourably of Berlioz's dramatic and descriptive symphonies. How should they appreciate the boldest musical achievement of the nineteenth century? These dreadful pedants and zealous defenders of an art that they only understand after it has ceased to live are the worst enemies of unfettered genius, and may do more harm than a whole army of ignorant people. For in a country like ours, where musical education is poor, timidity is great in the presence of a strong, but only half-understood, tradition; and anyone who has the boldness to break away from it is condemned without judgment. I doubt if Berlioz would have obtained any consideration at all from lovers of classical music in France if he had not found allies in that country of classical music, Germany -- "the oracle of Delphi," "Germania alma parens," as he called her. Some of the young German school found inspiration in Berlioz. The dramatic symphony that he created flourished in its German form under Liszt; the most eminent German composer of today, Richard Strauss, came under his influence; and Felix Weingartner, who with Charles Malherbe edited Berlioz's complete works, was bold enough to write, "In spite of Wagner and Liszt, we should not be where we are if Berlioz had not lived." This unexpected support, coming from a country of traditions, has thrown the partisans of Classic tradition into confusion, and rallied Berlioz's friends.

But here is a new danger. Though it is natural that Germany, more musical than France, should recognize the grandeur and originality of

Berlioz's music before France, it is doubtful whether the German nature could ever fully understand a soul so French in its essence. It is, perhaps, what is exterior in Berlioz, his positive originality, that the Germans appreciate. They prefer the *Requiem* to *Roméo*. A Richard Strauss would be attracted by an almost insignificant work like the *Ouverture du roi Lear*; a Weingartner would single out for notice works like the *Symphonie fantastique* and *Harold*, and exaggerate their importance. But they do not feel what is intimate in him. Wagner said over the tomb of Weber, "England does you justice, France admires you, but only Germany loves you; you are of her own being, a glorious day of her life, a warm drop of her blood, a part of her heart. . . ." One might adapt his words to Berlioz; it is as difficult for a German really to love Berlioz as it is for a Frenchman to love Wagner or Weber. One must, therefore, be careful about accepting unreservedly the judgment of Germany on Berlioz; for in that would lie the danger of a new misunderstanding. You see how both the followers and opponents to Berlioz hinder us from getting at the truth. Let us dismiss them.

Have we now come to the end of our difficulties? Not yet; for Berlioz is the most illusive of men, and no one has helped more than he to mislead people in their estimate of him. We know how much he has written about music and about his own life, and what wit and understanding he shows in his shrewd criticisms and charming *Mémoires*. One would think that such an imaginative and skilful writer, accustomed in his profession of critic to express every shade of feeling, would be able to tell us more exactly his ideas of art than a Beethoven or a Mozart. But it is not so. As too much light may blind the vision, so too much intellect may hinder the understanding. Berlioz's mind spent itself in details; it reflected light from too many facets, and did not focus itself in one strong beam which would have made known his power. He did not know how to dominate either his life or his work; he did not even try to dominate them. He was the incarnation of romantic genius, an unrestrained force, unconscious of the road he trod. I would not go so far as to say that he did not understand himself, but there are certainly times when he is past understanding himself. He allows himself to drift where chance will take him, like an old Scandinavian pirate laid at the bottom of his boat, staring up at the sky; and he dreams and groans and laughs and gives himself up to his feverish delusions. He lived with his emotions as uncertainly as he lived with his art. In his music, as in his criticisms of music, he often contradicts himself, hesitates, and turns back; he is not sure either of his feelings or his thoughts. He has poetry in his soul, and strives to write operas; but his admiration wavers between Gluck and Meyerbeer. He has a popular genius, but despises the people. He is a daring musical revolutionary, but he allows the control of this musical movement to be taken from him by anyone who wishes to have it. Worse than that: he disowns the movement,

turns his back upon the future, and throws himself again into the past. For what reason? Very often he does not know. Passion, bitterness, caprice, wounded pride — these have more influence with him than the serious things of life. He is a man at war with himself.

Then contrast Berlioz with Wagner. Wagner, too, was stirred by violent passions, but he was always master of himself, and his reason remained unshaken by the storms of his heart or those of the world, by the torments of love or the strife of political revolutions. He made his experiences and even his errors serve his art; he wrote about his theories before he put them into practice; and he only launched out when he was sure of himself, and when the way lay clear before him. And think how much Wagner owes to this written expression of his aims and the magnetic attraction of his arguments. It was his prose works that fascinated the King of Bavaria before he had heard his music; and for many others also they have been the key to that music. I remember being impressed by Wagner's ideas when I only half understood his art; and when one of his compositions puzzled me, my confidence was not shaken, for I was sure that the genius who was so convincing in his reasoning would not blunder; and that if his music baffled me, it was I who was at fault. Wagner was really his own best friend, his own most trusty champion; and his was the guiding hand that led one through the thick forest and over the rugged crags of his work.

Not only do you get no help from Berlioz in this way, but he is the first to lead you astray and wander with you in the paths of error. To understand his genius you must seize hold of it unaided. His genius was really great, but, as I shall try to show you, it lay at the mercy of a weak character.

.

Everything about Berlioz was misleading, even his appearance. In legendary portraits he appears as a dark southerner with black hair and sparkling eyes. But he was really very fair and had blue eyes, and Joseph d'Ortigue tells us they were deep-set and piercing, though sometimes clouded by melancholy or languor. He had a broad forehead furrowed with wrinkles by the time he was thirty, and a thick mane of hair, or, as E. Legouvé puts it, "a large umbrella of hair, projecting like a movable awning over the beak of a bird of prey. His mouth was well cut, with lips compressed and puckered at the corners in a severe fold, and his chin was prominent. He had a deep voice, but his speech was halting and often tremulous with emotion; he would speak passionately of what interested him, and at times be effusive in manner, but more often he was ungracious and reserved. He was of medium height, rather thin and angular in figure, and when seated he seemed much taller than he really was. He was very restless, and inherited from his native land, Dauphiné, the mountaineer's passion for walking and climbing, and the love of a vagabond life, which remained with him nearly to his death. He had an iron constitution, but he

wrecked it by privation and excess, by his walks in the rain, and by sleeping out of doors in all weathers, even when there was snow on the ground.

But in this strong and athletic frame lived a feverish and sickly soul that was dominated and tormented by a morbid craving for love and sympathy: "that imperative need of love which is killing me. . . ." To love, to be loved — he would give up all for that. But his love was that of a youth who lives in dreams; it was never the strong, clear-eyed passion of a man who has faced the realities of life, and who sees the defects as well as the charms of the woman he loves. Berlioz was in love with love, and lost himself among visions and sentimental shadows. To the end of his life he remained "a poor little child worn out by a love that was beyond him." But this man who lived so wild and adventurous a life expressed his passions with delicacy; and one finds an almost girlish purity in the immortal love passages of *Les Troyens* or the "*mit sercine*" of *Roméo et Juliette*. And compare this Virgilian affection with Wagner's sensual raptures. Does it mean that Berlioz could not love as well as Wagner? We only know that Berlioz's life was made up of love and its torments. The theme of a touching passage in the Introduction of the *Symphonic fantastique* has been recently identified by M. Julien Tiersot, in his interesting book, with a romance composed by Berlioz at the age of twelve, when he loved a girl of eighteen "with large eyes and pink shoes" — Estelle, *Stella montis*, *Stella matutina*. These words — perhaps the saddest he ever wrote — might serve as an emblem of his life, a life that was a prey to love and melancholy, doomed to wringing of the heart and awful loneliness; a life lived in a hollow world, among worries that chilled the blood; a life that was distasteful and had no solace to offer him in its end. He has himself described this terrible "*mal de l'isolement*," which pursued him all his life, vividly and minutely.

"I do not know how to describe this terrible sickness. . . . My throbbing breast seems to be sinking into space; and my heart, drawing in some irresistible force, feels as though it would expand until it evaporated and dissolved away. My skin becomes hot and tender, and flushes from head to foot. I want to cry out to my friends (even those I do not care for) to help and comfort me, to save me from destruction, and keep in the life that is ebbing from me. I have no sensation of impending death in these attacks, and suicide seems impossible; I do not want to die — far from it, I want very much to live, to intensify life a thousandfold. It is an excessive appetite for happiness, which becomes unbearable when it lacks food; and it is only satisfied by intense delights, which give this great overflow of feeling an outlet. It is not a state of spleen, though that may follow later. . . . spleen is rather the congealing of all these emotions — the block of ice. Even when I am calm I feel a little of this '*isolement*' on Sundays in summer, when our towns are lifeless, and everyone is in the country; for I know that people are enjoying themselves away from me, and I feel their

absence. The *adagio* of Beethoven's symphonies, certain scenes from Gluck's *Alceste* and *Armide*, an air from his Italian opera *Telemacco*, the Elysian fields of his *Orfeo*, will bring on rather bad attacks of this suffering; but these masterpieces bring with them also an antidote — they make one's tears flow, and then the pain is eased. On the other hand, the *adagio* of some of Beethoven's sonatas and Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* are full of melancholy, and therefore provoke spleen . . . it is then cold within, the sky is grey and overcast with clouds, the north wind moans dully. . . ." (*Mémoires*, I, 246).

He was doomed to suffering, or, what was worse, to make others suffer.

Who does not know his passion for Henrietta Smithson? It was a sad story. He fell in love with an English actress who played Juliet. (Was it she or Juliet whom he loved?) He caught but a glance of her, and it was all over with him. He cried out, "Ah, I am lost!" He desired her; she repulsed him. He lived in a delirium of suffering and passion; he wandered about for days and nights like a madman, up and down Paris and its neighbourhood, without purpose or rest or relief, until sleep overcame him wherever it found him — among the sheaves in a field near Villejuif, in a meadow near Sceaux, on the bank of the frozen Seine near Neuilly, in the snow, and once on a table in the Café Cardinal, where he slept for five hours, to the great alarm of the waiters, who thought he was dead. Meanwhile, he was told slanderous gossip about Henrietta, which he readily believed. Then he despised her, and dishonoured her publicly in his *Symphonie fantastique*, paying homage in his bitter resentment to Camille Moke, a pianist, to whom he lost his heart without delay.

After a time Henrietta reappeared. She had now lost her youth and her power; her beauty was waning, and she was in debt. Berlioz's passion was at once rekindled. This time Henrietta accepted his advances. He made alterations in his symphony, and offered it to her in homage of his love. He won her, and married her, with fourteen thousand francs debt. He had captured his dream — Juliet! Ophelia! What was she really? A charming Englishwoman, cold, loyal, and sober-minded, who understood nothing of his passion; and who, from the time she became his wife, loved him jealously and sincerely, and thought to confine him within the narrow world of domestic life. But his affections became restive, and he lost his heart to a Spanish actress (it was always an actress, a virtuoso, or a part) and left poor Ophelia, and went off with Marie Recio, the Inès of *Favorite*, the page of *Comte Ory* — a practical, hard-headed woman, an indifferent singer with a mania for singing. The haughty Berlioz was forced to fawn upon the directors of the theatre in order to get her parts, to write flattering notices in praise of her talents, and even to let her make his own melodies discordant at the concerts he arranged. It would all be dreadfully ridiculous if this weakness of character had not brought tragedy in its train.

So the one he really loved, and who always loved him, remained alone,

without friends, in Paris, where she was a stranger. She drooped in silence and pined slowly away, bedridden, paralysed, and unable to speak during eight years of suffering. Berlioz suffered too, for he loved her still and was torn with pity — “pity, the most painful of all emotions.” But of what use was this pity? He left Henrietta to suffer alone and to die just the same. And, what was worse, as we learn from Legouvé, he let his mistress, the odious Recio, make a scene before poor Henrietta. Recio told him of it and boasted about what she had done. And Berlioz did nothing — “How could I? I love her.”

One would be hard upon such a man if one was not disarmed by his own sufferings. But let us go on. I should have liked to pass over these traits, but I have no right to; I must show you the extraordinary feebleness of the man's character. “Man's character,” did I say? No, it was the character of a woman without a will, the victim of her nerves.

.

Such people are destined to unhappiness; and if they make other people suffer, one may be sure that it is only half of what they suffer themselves. They have a peculiar gift for attracting and gathering up trouble; they savour sorrow like wine, and do not lose a drop of it. Life seemed desirous that Berlioz should be steeped in suffering; and his misfortunes were so real that it would be unnecessary to add to them any exaggerations that history has handed down to us.

People find fault with Berlioz's continual complaints; and I, too, find in them a lack of virility and almost a lack of dignity. To all appearances, he had far fewer material reasons for unhappiness than — I won't say Beethoven — Wagner and other great men, past, present, and future. When thirty-five years old he had achieved glory; and Paganini proclaimed him Beethoven's successor. What more could he want? He was discussed by the public, disparaged by a Scudo and an Adolphus Adam, and the theatre only opened its doors to him with difficulty. It was really splendid!

But a careful examination of facts, such as that made by M. Julien Tiersot, shows the stifling mediocrity and hardship of his life. There were, first of all, his material cares. When thirty-six years old “Beethoven's successor” had a fixed salary of fifteen hundred francs as assistant keeper of the Conservatoire Library, and not quite as much for his contributions to the *Débats* — contributions which exasperated and humiliated him, and were one of the crosses of his life, as they obliged him to speak anything but the truth. That made a total of three thousand francs, hardly gained, on which he had to keep a wife and child — “*même deux*,” as M. Tiersot says. He attempted a festival at the Opera; the result was three hundred and sixty francs loss. He organized a festival at the 1844 Exhibition; the receipts were thirty-two thousand francs, out of which he got eight

hundred francs. He had the *Damnation de Faust* performed; no one came to it, and he was ruined. Things went better in Russia; but the manager who brought him to England became bankrupt. He was haunted by thoughts of rents and doctors' bills. Towards the end of his life his financial affairs mended a little, and a year before his death he uttered these sad words: "I suffer a great deal, but I do not want to die now — I have enough to live upon."

One of the most tragic episodes of his life is that of the symphony which he did not write because of his poverty. One wonders why the page that finishes his *Mémoires* is not better known, for it touches the depths of human suffering.

At the time when his wife's health was causing him most anxiety, there came to him one night an inspiration for a symphony. The first part of it — an allegro in two-four time in A minor — was ringing in his head. He got up and began to write, and then he thought: —

"If I begin this bit, I shall have to write the whole symphony. It will be a big thing, and I shall have to spend three or four months over it. That means I shall write no more articles and earn no money. And when the symphony is finished I shall not be able to resist the temptation of having it copied (which will mean an expense of a thousand or twelve hundred francs), and then of having it played. I shall give a concert, and the receipts will barely cover half the cost. I shall lose what I have not got; the poor invalid will lack necessities; and I shall be able to pay neither my personal expenses nor my son's fees when he goes on board ship. . . . These thoughts made me shudder, and I threw down my pen, saying, 'Bah! tomorrow I shall have forgotten the symphony.' The next night I heard the allegro clearly, and seemed to see it written down. I was filled with feverish agitation; I sang the theme; I was going to get up . . . but the reflexions of the day before restrained me; I steeled myself against the temptation, and clung to the thought of forgetting it. At last I went to sleep; and the next day, on waking, all remembrance of it had, indeed, gone for ever."

That page makes one shudder. Suicide is less distressing. Neither Beethoven nor Wagner suffered such tortures. What would Wagner have done on a like occasion? He would have written the symphony without doubt — and he would have been right. But poor Berlioz, who was weak enough to sacrifice his duty to love, was, alas! also heroic enough to sacrifice his genius to duty.

And in spite of all this material misery and the sorrow of being misunderstood, people speak of the glory he enjoyed. What did his compeers think of him — at least, those who called themselves such? He knew that Mendelssohn, whom he loved and esteemed, and who styled himself his "good friend," despised him and did not recognize his genius. The large-

hearted Schumann, who was, with the exception of Liszt, the only person who intuitively felt his greatness, admitted that he used sometimes to wonder if he ought to be looked upon as "a genius or a musical adventurer." Wagner, who treated his symphonies with scorn before he had even read him, threw himself into Berlioz's arms when he met him in London in 1855. "He embraced him with fervour, and wept; and hardly had he left him when *The Musical World* published passages from his book, *Oper und Drama*, where he pulls Berlioz to pieces mercilessly." In France, the young Gounod, *doli fabricator Epeus*, as Berlioz called him, lavished flattering words upon him, but spent his time in finding fault with his compositions, or in trying to supplant him at the theatre. At the Opera he was passed over in favour of a Prince Poniatowski. He presented himself three times at the Academy, and was beaten the first time by Onslow, the second time by Clapisson, and the third time he conquered by a majority of one vote against Panseron, Vogel, Leborne, and others, including, as always, Gounod. He died before the *Damnation de Faust* was appreciated in France, although it was the most remarkable musical composition France had produced. They hissed its performance? Not at all; "they were merely indifferent" . . . it is Berlioz who tells us this. It passed unnoticed. He died before he had seen *Les Troyens* played in its entirety, though it was one of the noblest works of the French lyric theatre that had been composed since the death of Gluck. But there is no need to be astonished. To hear these works today one must go to Germany. And although the dramatic work of Berlioz has found its Bayreuth — thanks to Mottl, to Karlsruhe and Munich — and the marvellous *Benvenuto Cellini* has been played in twenty German towns, and regarded as a masterpiece by Weingartner and Richard Strauss, what manager of a French theatre would think of producing such works?

But this is not all. What was the bitterness of failure compared with the great anguish of death? Berlioz saw all those he loved die one after the other: his father, his mother, Henrietta Smithson, Marie Recio. Then only his son Louis remained. He was the captain of a merchant vessel; a clever, good-hearted boy, but restless and nervous, irresolute and unhappy, like his father. "He has the misfortune to resemble me in everything," said Berlioz; "and we love each other like a couple of twins." "Ah, my poor Louis," he wrote to him, "what should I do without you?" A few months afterwards he learnt that Louis had died in far-away seas.

He was now alone. There were no more friendly voices; all that he heard was a hideous duet between loneliness and weariness, sung in his ear during the bustle of the day and in the silence of the night. He was wasted with disease. In 1856, at Weimar, following great fatigue, he was seized with an internal malady. It began with great mental distress; he used to sleep in the streets. He suffered constantly; he was like "a tree without leaves, streaming with rain." At the end of 1861, the disease was in an acute stage.

He had attacks of pain sometimes lasting thirty hours, during which he would writhe in agony in his bed. "I live in the midst of my physical pain, overwhelmed with weariness. Death is very slow."

Worst of all, in the heart of his misery, there was nothing that comforted him. He believed in nothing — neither in God nor immortality.

"I have no faith. . . . I hate all philosophy and everything that resembles it, whether religious or otherwise. . . . I am as incapable of making a medicine of faith as of having faith in medicine."

"God is stupid and cruel in his complete indifference."

He did not believe in beauty or honour, in mankind or himself.

"Everything passes. Space and time consume beauty, youth, love, glory, genius. Human life is nothing; death is no better. Worlds are born and die like ourselves. All is nothing. Yes, yes, yes! All is nothing. . . . To love or hate, enjoy or suffer, admire or sneer, live or die — what does it matter? There is nothing in greatness or littleness, beauty or ugliness. Eternity is indifferent; indifference is eternal."

"I am weary of life; and I am forced to see that belief in absurdities is necessary to human minds, and that it is born in them as insects are born in swamps."

"You make me laugh with your old words about a mission to fulfil. What a missionary! But there is in me an inexplicable mechanism which works in spite of all arguments; and I let it work because I cannot stop it. What disgusts me most is the certainty that beauty does not exist for the majority of these human monkeys."

"The unsolvable enigma of the world, the existence of evil and pain, the fierce madness of mankind, and the stupid cruelty that it inflicts hourly and everywhere on the most inoffensive beings and on itself — all this has reduced me to the state of unhappy and forlorn resignation of a scorpion surrounded by live coals. The most I can do is not to wound myself with my own dart."

"I am in my sixty-first year; and I have no more hopes or illusions or aspirations. I am alone; and my contempt for the stupidity and dishonesty of men, and my hatred for their wicked cruelty, are at their height. Every hour I say to Death, 'When you like! What is he waiting for?'"

And yet he fears the death he invites. It is the strongest, the bitterest, the truest feeling he has. No musician since old Roland de Lassus has feared it with that intensity. Do you remember Herod's sleepless nights in *L'Enfance du Christ*, or Faust's soliloquy, or the anguish of Cassandra, or the burial of Juliette? — through all this you will find the whispered fear of annihilation. The wretched man was haunted by this fear, as a letter published by M. Julien Tiersot shows: —

"My favourite walk, especially when it is raining, really raining in torrents, is the cemetery of Montmartre, which is near my house. I often go there; there is much that draws me to it. The day before yesterday I passed two hours in the cemetery; I found a comfortable seat on a costly tomb, and I went to sleep. . . . Paris is to me a cemetery and her pavements are tombstones. Everywhere are memories of friends or enemies that are dead. I do nothing but suffer unceasing pain and unspeakable weariness. I wonder night and day if I shall die in great pain or with little of it — I am not foolish enough to hope to die without any pain at all. Why are we not dead?"

His music is like these mournful words; it is perhaps even more terrible, more gloomy, for it breathes death. What a contrast: a soul greedy of life and preyed upon by death. It is this that makes his life such an awful tragedy. When Wagner met Berlioz he heaved a sigh of relief — he had at last found a man more unhappy than himself.

On the threshold of death he turned in despair to the one ray of light left him — *Stella montis*, the inspiration of his childish love; Estelle, now old, a grandmother, withered by age and grief. He made a pilgrimage to Meylan, near Grenoble, to see her. He was then sixty-one years old and she was nearly seventy. "The past! the past! O Time! Nevermore! Nevermore!"

Nevertheless, he loved her, and loved her desperately. How pathetic it is. One has little inclination to smile when one sees the depths of that desolate heart. Do you think he did not see, as clearly as you or I would see, the wrinkled old face, the indifference of age, the "*triste raison*," in her he idealized? Remember, he was the most ironical of men. But he did not wish to see these things, he wished to cling to a little love, which would help him to live in the wilderness of life.

"There is nothing real in this world but that which lives in the heart. . . . My life has been wrapped up in the obscure little village where she lives. . . . Life is only endurable when I tell myself: 'This autumn I shall spend a month beside her.' I should die in this hell of a Paris if she did not allow me to write to her, and if from time to time I had not letters from her."

So he spoke to Legouvé; and he sat down on a stone in a Paris street, and wept. In the meantime, the old lady did not understand this foolishness; she hardly tolerated it, and sought to undeceive him.

"When one's hair is white one must leave dreams ~~and~~ even those of friendship. . . . Of what use is it to form ties which, though they hold to-day, may break tomorrow?"

What were his dreams? To live with her? No; rather to die beside her; to feel she was by his side when death should come.

"To be at your feet, my head on your knees, your two hands in mine — so to finish."

He was a little child grown old, and felt bewildered and miserable and frightened before the thought of death.

Wagner, at the same age, a victor, worshipped, flattered, and — if we are to believe the Bayreuth legend — crowned with prosperity; Wagner, sad and suffering, doubting his achievements, feeling the inanity of his bitter fight against the mediocrity of the world, had "fled far from the world" and thrown himself into religion; and when a friend looked at him in surprise as he was saying grace at table, he answered: "Yes, I believe in my Saviour."

Poor beings! Conquerors of the world, conquered and broken!

But of the two deaths, how much sadder is that of the artist who was without a faith, and who had neither strength nor stoicism enough to be happy without one; who slowly died in that little room in the rue de Calais amid the distracting noise of an indifferent and even hostile Paris; who shut himself up in savage silence; who saw no loved face bending over him in his last moments; who had not the comfort of belief in his work; who could not think calmly of what he had done, nor look proudly back over the road he had trodden, nor rest content in the thought of a life well lived; and who began and closed his *Mémoires* with Shakspeare's gloomy words, and repeated them when dying: —

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

Such was the unhappy and irresolute heart that found itself united to one of the most daring geniuses in the world. It is a striking example of the difference that may exist between genius and greatness — for the two words are not synonymous. When one speaks of greatness, one speaks of greatness of soul, nobility of character, firmness of will, and, above all, balance of mind. I can understand how people deny the existence of these qualities in Berlioz; but to deny his musical genius, or to cavil about his wonderful power — and that is what they do daily in Paris — is lamentable and ridiculous. Whether he attracts one or not, a thimbleful of some of his work, a single part in one of his works, a little bit of the *Fantastique* or the overture of *Benvenuto*, reveals more genius — I am not afraid to say it — than all the French music of his century. I can understand people arguing about him in a country that produced Beethoven and Bach; but

with us in France, who can we set up against him? Gluck and César Franck were much greater men, but they were never geniuses of his stature. If genius is a creative force, I cannot find more than four or five geniuses in the world who rank above him. When I have named Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, Handel, and Wagner, I do not know who else is superior to Berlioz; I do not even know who is his equal.

He is not only a musician, he is music itself. He does not command his familiar spirit, he is its slave. Those who know his writings know how he was simply possessed and exhausted by his musical emotions. They were really fits of ecstasy or convulsions. At first "there was feverish excitement; the veins beat violently and tears flowed freely. Then came spasmodic contractions of the muscles, total numbness of the feet and hands, and partial paralysis of the nerves of sight and hearing; he saw nothing, heard nothing; he was giddy and half faint." And in the case of music that displeased him, he suffered, on the contrary, from "a painful sense of bodily disquiet and even from nausea."

The possession that music held over his nature shows itself clearly in the sudden outbreak of his genius. His family opposed the idea of his becoming a musician; and until he was twenty-two or twenty-three years old his weak will sulkily gave way to their wishes. In obedience to his father he began his studies in medicine at Paris. One evening he heard *Les Danaïdes* of Salieri. It came upon him like a thunderclap. He ran to the Conservatoire library and read Gluck's scores. He forgot to eat and drink; he was like a man in a frenzy. A performance of *Iphigénie en Tauride* finished him. He studied under Lesueur and then at the Conservatoire. The following year, 1827, he composed *Les Francs-Juges*; two years afterwards the *Huit scènes de Faust*, which was the nucleus of the future *Damnation*; three years afterwards, the *Symphonie fantastique* (commenced in 1830). And he had not yet got the *Prix de Rome*! Add to this that in 1828 he had already ideas for *Roméo et Juliette*, and that he had written a part of *Lelio* in 1829. Can one find elsewhere a more dazzling musical début? Compare that of Wagner who, at the same age, was shyly writing *Les Fées*, *Défense d'aimer*, and *Rienzi*. He wrote them at the same age, but ten years later; for *Les Fées* appeared in 1833, when Berlioz had already written the *Fantastique*, the *Huit scènes de Faust*, *Lelio*, and *Harold*; *Rienzi* was only played in 1842, after *Benvenuto* (1835), *Le Requiem* (1837), *Roméo* (1839), *La Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* (1840) — that is to say, when Berlioz had finished all his great works, and after he had achieved his musical revolution. And that revolution was effected alone, without a model, without a guide. What could he have heard beyond the operas of Gluck and Spontini while he was at the Conservatoire? At the time when he composed the *Ouverture des Francs-Juges* even the name of Weber was unknown to him, and of Beethoven's compositions he had only heard an *andante*.

Truly, he is a miracle and the most startling phenomenon in the history of nineteenth-century music. His audacious power dominates all his age; and in the face of such a genius, who would not follow Paganini's example, and hail him as Beethoven's only successor? Who does not see what a poor figure the young Wagner cut at that time, working away in laborious and self-satisfied mediocrity? But Wagner soon made up for lost ground; for he knew what he wanted, and he wanted it obstinately.

The zenith of Berlioz's genius was reached, when he was thirty-five years old, with the *Requiem* and *Roméo*. They are his two most important works, and are two works about which one may feel very differently. For my part, I am very fond of the one, and I dislike the other; but both of them open up two great new roads in art, and both are placed like two gigantic arches on the triumphal way of the revolution that Berlioz started. I will return to the subject of these works later.

But Berlioz was already getting old. His daily cares and stormy domestic life [He left Henrietta Smithson in 1842; she died in 1854.], his disappointments and passions, his commonplace and often degrading work, soon wore him out and, finally, exhausted his power. "Would you believe it?" he wrote to his friend Ferrand, "that which used to stir me to transports of musical passion now fills me with indifference, or even disdain. I feel as if I were descending a mountain at a great rate. Life is so short; I notice that thoughts of the end have been with me for some time past." In 1848, at forty-five years old, he wrote in his *Mémoires*: "I find myself so old and tired and lacking inspiration." At forty-five years old, Wagner had patiently worked out his theories and was feeling his power; at forty-five he was writing *Tristan* and *The Music of the Future*. Abused by critics, unknown to the public, "he remained calm, in the belief that he would be master of the musical world in fifty years' time."

Berlioz was disheartened. Life had conquered him. It was not that he had lost any of his artistic mastery; on the contrary, his compositions became more and more finished; and nothing in his earlier work attained the pure beauty of some of the pages of *L'Enfance du Christ* (1850-4), or of *Les Troyens* (1855-63). But he was losing his power; and his intense feeling, his revolutionary ideas, and his inspiration (which in his youth had taken the place of the confidence he lacked) were failing him. He now lived on the past -- the *Huit scènes de Faust* (1828) held the germs of *La Damnation de Faust* (1846); since 1833 he had been thinking of *Béatrice et Bénédict* (1862); the ideas in *Les Troyens* were inspired by his childish worship of Virgil, and had been with him all his life. But with what difficulty he now finished his task! He had only taken seven months to write *Roméo*, and "on account of not being able to write the *Requiem* fast enough, he had adopted a kind of musical shorthand," but he took seven or eight years to write *Les Troyens*, alternating between moods of enthusiasm and disgust, and feeling indifference and doubt about his work. He groped his way

hesitatingly and unsteadily; he hardly understood what he was doing. He admired the more mediocre pages of his work: the scene of the Laocoon, the finale of the last act of the *Les Troyens à Troie*, the last scene with Æneas in *Les Troyens à Carthage*. The empty pomposities of Spontini mingle with the loftiest conceptions. One might say that his genius became a stranger to him: it was the mechanical work of an unconscious force, like "stalactites in a dripping grotto." He had no impetus. It was only a matter of time before the roof of the grotto would give way. One is struck with the mournful despair with which he works; it is his last will and testament that he is making. And when he has finished it, he will have finished everything. His work is ended; if he lived another hundred years he would not have the heart to add anything more to it. The only thing that remains — and it is what he is about to do — is to wrap himself in silence and die.

Oh, mournful destiny! There are great men who have outlived their genius; but with Berlioz genius outlived desire. His genius was still there; one feels it in the sublime pages of the third act of *Les Troyens à Carthage*. But Berlioz had ceased to believe in his power; he had lost faith in everything. His genius was dying for want of nourishment; it was a flame above an empty tomb. At the same hour of his old age the soul of Wagner sustained its glorious flight; and, having conquered everything, it achieved a supreme victory in renouncing everything for its faith. And the divine songs of Parsifal resounded as in a splendid temple, and replied to the cries of the suffering Amfortas by the blessed words: "*Selig in Glauben! Selig in Liebe!*"

II

Berlioz's work did not spread itself evenly over his life; it was accomplished in a few years. It was not like the course of a great river, as with Wagner and Beethoven; it was a burst of genius, whose flames lit up the whole sky for a little while, and then died gradually down. Let me try to tell you about this wonderful blaze.

Some of Berlioz's musical qualities are so striking that it is unnecessary to dwell upon them here. His instrumental colouring, so intoxicating and exciting, his extraordinary discoveries concerning timbre, his inventions of new nuances (as in the famous combining of flutes and trombones in the *Hostias et preces* of the *Requiem*, and the curious use of the harmonies of violins and harps), and his huge and nebulous orchestra — all this lends itself to the most subtle expression of thought. Think of the effect that such works must have produced at that period. Berlioz was the first to be astonished when he heard them for the first time. At the *Ouverture des Francs-Juges* he wept and tore his hair, and fell sobbing on the kettledrums. At the performance of his *Tuba mirum*, in Berlin, he nearly fainted. The composer who most nearly approached him was Weber, and, as we have already seen, Berlioz only knew him late in life. But how much less rich and

complex is Weber's music, in spite of its nervous brilliance and dreaming poetry. Above all, Weber is much more mundane and more of a classicist; he lacks Berlioz's revolutionary passion and plebeian force; he is less expressive and less grand.

How did Berlioz come to have this genius for orchestration almost from the very first? He himself says that his two masters at the Conservatoire taught him nothing in point of instrumentation: —

"Lesueur had only very limited ideas about the art. Reicha knew the particular resources of most of the wind instruments; but I think that he had not very advanced ideas on the subject of grouping them."

Berlioz taught himself. He used to read the score of an opera while it was being performed.

"It was thus," he says, "that I began to get familiar with the use of the orchestra, and to know its expression and timbre, as well as the range and mechanism of most of the instruments. By carefully comparing the effect produced with the means used to produce it, I learned the hidden bond which unites musical expression to the special art of instrumentation; but no one put me in the way of this. The study of the methods of the three modern masters, Beethoven, Weber, and Spontini, the impartial examination of the traditions of instrumentation and of little-used forms and combinations, conversations with virtuosi, and the effects I made them try on their different instruments, together with a little instinct, did the rest for me."

That he was an originator in this direction no one doubts. And no one disputes, as a rule, "his devilish cleverness," as Wagner scornfully called it, or remains insensible to his skill and mastery in the mechanism of expression, and his power over sonorous matter, which make him, apart from his creative power, a sort of magician of music, a king of tone and rhythm. This gift is recognized even by his enemies — by Wagner, who seeks with some unfairness to restrict his genius within narrow limits, and to reduce it to "a structure with wheels of infinite ingenuity and extreme cunning . . . a marvel of mechanism."

But though there is hardly anyone that Berlioz does not irritate or attract, he always strikes people by his impetuous ardour, his glowing romance, and his seething imagination, all of which makes and will continue to make his work one of the most picturesque mirrors of his age. His frenzied force of ecstasy and despair, his fulness of love and hatred, his perpetual thirst for life, which "in the heart of the deepest sorrow lights the Catherine wheels and crackers of the wildest joy" — these are the qualities that stir up the crowds in *Benvenuto* and the armies in the *Damnation*, that shake earth, heaven, and hell, and are never quenched, but remain

devouring and "passionate even when the subject is far removed from passion, and yet also express sweet and tender sentiments and the deepest calm."

Whatever one may think of this volcanic force, of this torrential stream of youth and passion, it is impossible to deny them; one might as well deny the sun.

And I shall not dwell on Berlioz's love of Nature, which, as M. Prudhomme shows us, is the soul of a composition like the *Damnation* and, one might say, of all great compositions. No musician, with the exception of Beethoven, has loved Nature so profoundly. Wagner himself did not realize the intensity of emotion which she roused in Berlioz and how this feeling impregnated the music of the *Damnation*, of *Roméo*, and of *Les Troyens*.

But this genius had other characteristics which are less well known, though they are not less unusual. The first is his sense of pure beauty. Berlioz's exterior romanticism must not make us blind to this. He had a Virgilian soul; and if his colouring recalls that of Weber, his design has often an Italian suavity. Wagner never had this love of beauty in the Latin sense of the word. Who has understood the Southern nature, beautiful form, and harmonious movement like Berlioz's? Who, since Gluck, has recognized so well the secret of classical beauty? Since *Orfeo* was composed, no one has carved in music a bas-relief so perfect as the entrance of Andromache in the second act of *Les Troyens à Troie*. In *Les Troyens à Carthage*, the fragrance of the *Æneid* is shed over the night of love, and we see the luminous sky and hear the murmur of the sea. Some of his melodies are like statues, or the pure lines of Athenian friezes, or the noble gesture of beautiful Italian girls, or the undulating profile of the Albanian hills filled with divine laughter. He has done more than felt and translated into music the beauty of the Mediterranean—he has created beings worthy of a Greek tragedy. His *Cassandre* alone would suffice to rank him among the greatest tragic poets that music has even known. And *Cassandre* is a worthy sister of Wagner's *Brünnhilde*; but she has the advantage of coming of a nobler race, and of having a lofty restraint of spirit and action that Sophocles himself would have loved.

Not enough attention has been drawn to the classical nobility from which Berlioz's art so spontaneously springs. It is not fully acknowledged that he was, of all nineteenth-century musicians, the one who had in the highest degree the sense of plastic beauty. Nor do people always recognize that he was a writer of sweet and flowing melodies. Weingartner expressed the surprise he felt when, imbued with current prejudice against Berlioz's lack of melodic invention, he opened, by chance, the score of the overture of *Benvenuto* and found in that short composition, which barely takes ten minutes to play, not one or two, but four or five melodies of admirable richness and originality:—

"I began to laugh, both with pleasure at having discovered such a treasure, and with annoyance at finding how narrow human judgment is.

Here I counted five themes, all of them plastic and expressive of personality; of admirable workmanship, varied in form, working up by degrees to a climax, and then finishing with strong effect. And this from a composer who was said by critics and the public to be devoid of creative power! From that day on there has been for me another great citizen in the republic of art."

Before this, Berlioz had written in 1864: —

"It is quite easy for others to convince themselves that, without even limiting me to take a very short melody as the theme of a composition — as the greatest musicians have often done — I have always endeavoured to put a wealth of melody into my compositions. One may, of course, dispute the worth of these melodies, their distinction, originality, or charm — it is not for me to judge them — but to deny their existence is either unfair or foolish. They are often on a large scale; and an immature or short-sighted musical vision may not clearly distinguish their form; or, again, they may be accompanied by secondary melodies which, to a limited vision, may veil the form of the principal ones. Or, lastly, shallow musicians may find these melodies so unlike the funny little things that they call melodies, that they cannot bring themselves to give the same name to both."

And what a splendid variety there is in these melodies: there is the song in Gluck's style (Cassandre's airs), the pure German *lied* (Marguerite's song, "D'amour l'ardente flamme"), the Italian melody, after Bellini, in its most limpid and happy form (arietta of Arlequin in *Benvenuto*), the broad Wagnerian phrase (finale of *Roméo*), the folk-song (chorus of shepherds in *L'Enfance du Christ*), and the freest and most modern recitative (the monologues of Faust), which was Berlioz's own invention, with its full development, its pliant outline, and its intricate nuances.

I have said that Berlioz had a matchless gift for expressing tragic melancholy, weariness of life, and the pangs of death. In a general way, one may say that he was a great elegist in music. Ambros, who was a very discerning and unbiassed critic, said: "Berlioz feels with inward delight and profound emotion what no musician, except Beethoven, has felt before." And Heinrich Heine had a keen perception of Berlioz's originality when he called him "a colossal nightingale, a lark the size of an eagle." The simile is not only picturesque, but of remarkable aptness. For Berlioz's colossal force is at the service of a forlorn and tender heart; he has nothing of the heroism of Beethoven, or Handel, or Gluck, or even Schubert. He has all the charm of an Umbrian painter, as is shown in *L'Enfance du Christ*, as well as sweetness and inward sadness, the gift of tears, and an elegiac passion.

Now I come to Berlioz's great originality, an originality which is rarely spoken of, though it makes him more than a great musician, more than the successor of Beethoven, or, as some call him, the forerunner of Wagner.

It is an originality that entitles him to be known, even more fitly than Wagner himself, as the creator of "an art of the future," the apostle of a new music, which even today has hardly made itself felt.

Berlioz is original in a double sense. By the extraordinary complexity of his genius he touched the two opposite poles of his art, and showed us two entirely different aspects of music — that of a great popular art, and that of music made free.

We are all enslaved by the musical tradition of the past. For generations we have been so accustomed to carry this yoke that we scarcely notice it. And in consequence of Germany's monopoly of music since the end of the eighteenth century, musical traditions — which had been chiefly Italian in the two preceding centuries — now became almost entirely German. We think in German forms: the plan of phrases, their development, their balance, and all the rhetoric of music and the grammar of composition comes to us from foreign thought, slowly elaborated by German masters. That domination has never been more complete or more heavy since Wagner's victory. Then reigned over the world this great German period — a scaly monster with a thousand arms, whose grasp was so extensive that it included pages, scenes, acts, and whole dramas in its embrace. We cannot say that French writers have ever tried to write in the style of Goethe or Schiller; but French composers have tried and are still trying to write music after the manner of German musicians.

Why be astonished at it? Let us face the matter plainly. In music we have not, so to speak, any masters of French style. All our greatest composers are foreigners. The founder of the first school of French opera, Lulli, was Florentine; the founder of the second school, Gluck, was German; the two founders of the third school were Rossini, an Italian, and Meyerbeer, a German; the creators of *opéra-comique* were Duni, an Italian, and Gretry, a Belgian; Franck, who revolutionized our modern school of opera, was also Belgian. These men brought with them a style peculiar to their race; or else they tried to found, as Gluck did, an "international" style, by which they effaced the more individual characteristics of the French spirit. The most French of all these styles is the *opéra-comique*, the work of two foreigners, but owing much more to the *opéra-bouffe* than is generally admitted, and, in any case, representing France very insufficiently. Some more rational minds have tried to rid themselves of this Italian and German influence, but have mostly arrived at creating an intermediate Germano-Italian style, of which the operas of Auber and Ambroise Thomas are a type.

Before Berlioz's time there was really only one master of the first rank who made a great effort to liberate French music: it was Rameau; and, despite his genius, he was conquered by Italian art.

By force of circumstance, therefore, French music found itself moulded in foreign musical forms. And in the same way that Germany in the eight-

eenth century tried to imitate French architecture and literature, so France in the nineteenth century acquired the habit of speaking German in music. As most men speak more than they think, even thought itself became Germanized; and it was difficult then to discover, through this traditional insincerity, the true and spontaneous form of French musical thought.

But Berlioz's genius found it by instinct. From the first he strove to free French music from the oppression of the foreign tradition that was suffocating it.

He was fitted in every way for the part, even by his deficiencies and his ignorance. His classical education in music was incomplete. M. Saint-Saëns tells us that "the past did not exist for him; he did not understand the old composers, as his knowledge of them was limited to what he had read about them." He did not know Bach. Happy ignorance! He was able to write oratorios like *L'Enfance du Christ* without being worried by memories and traditions of the German masters of oratorio. There are men like Brahms who have been, nearly all their life, but reflexions of the past. Berlioz never sought to be anything but himself. It was thus that he created that masterpiece, *La Fuite en Égypte*, which sprang from his keen sympathy with the people.

He had one of the most untrammelled spirits that ever breathed. Liberty was for him a desperate necessity. "Liberty of heart, of mind, of soul — of everything. . . . Real liberty, absolute and immense!" And this passionate love of liberty, which was his misfortune in life, since it deprived him of the comfort of any faith, refused him any refuge for his thoughts, robbed him of peace, and even of the soft pillow of scepticism — this "real liberty" formed the unique originality and grandeur of his musical conceptions.

"Music," wrote Berlioz to C. Lobe, in 1852, "is the most poetic, the most powerful, the most living of all arts. She ought to be the freest, but she is not yet. . . . Modern music is like the classic Andromeda, naked and divinely beautiful. She is chained to a rock on the shores of a vast sea, and awaits the victorious Perseus who shall loose her bonds and break in pieces the chimera called Routine."

The business was to free music from its limited rhythms and from the traditional forms and rules that enclosed it; and, above all, it needed to be free from the domination of speech, and to be released from its humiliating bondage to poetry. Berlioz wrote to the Princess of Wittgenstein, in 1856: —

"I am for free music. Yes, I want music to be proudly free, to be victorious, to be supreme. I want her to take all she can, so that there may be no more Alps or Pyrenees for her. But she must achieve her victories by fighting in person, and not rely upon her lieutenants. I should like her

eenth century tried to imitate French architecture and literature, so France in the nineteenth century acquired the habit of speaking German in music. As most men speak more than they think, even thought itself became Germanized; and it was difficult then to discover, through this traditional insincerity, the true and spontaneous form of French musical thought.

But Berlioz's genius found it by instinct. From the first he strove to free French music from the oppression of the foreign tradition that was suffocating it.

He was fitted in every way for the part, even by his deficiencies and his ignorance. His classical education in music was incomplete. M. Saint-Saëns tells us that "the past did not exist for him; he did not understand the old composers, as his knowledge of them was limited to what he had read about them." He did not know Bach. Happy ignorance! He was able to write oratorios like *L'Enfance du Christ* without being worried by memories and traditions of the German masters of oratorio. There are men like Brahms who have been, nearly all their life, but reflexions of the past. Berlioz never sought to be anything but himself. It was thus that he created that masterpiece, *La Fuite en Égypte*, which sprang from his keen sympathy with the people.

He had one of the most untrammelled spirits that ever breathed. Liberty was for him a desperate necessity. "Liberty of heart, of mind, of soul—of everything. . . . Real liberty, absolute and immense!" And this passionate love of liberty, which was his misfortune in life, since it deprived him of the comfort of any faith, refused him any refuge for his thoughts, robbed him of peace, and even of the soft pillow of scepticism—this "real liberty" formed the unique originality and grandeur of his musical conceptions.

"Music," wrote Berlioz to C. Lobe, in 1852, "is the most poetic, the most powerful, the most living of all arts. She ought to be the freest, but she is not yet. . . . Modern music is like the classic Andromeda, naked and divinely beautiful. She is chained to a rock on the shores of a vast sea, and awaits the victorious Perseus who shall loose her bonds and break in pieces the chimera called Routine."

The business was to free music from its limited rhythms and from the traditional forms and rules that enclosed it; and, above all, it needed to be free from the domination of speech, and to be released from its humiliating bondage to poetry. Berlioz wrote to the Princess of Wittgenstein, in 1856:—

"I am for free music. Yes, I want music to be proudly free, to be victorious, to be supreme. I want her to take all she can, so that there may be no more Alps or Pyrenees for her. But she must achieve her victories by fighting in person, and not rely upon her lieutenants. I should like her

to have, if possible, good verse drawn up in order of battle; but, like Napoleon, she must face the fire herself, and, like Alexander, march in the front ranks of the phalanx. She is so powerful that in some cases she would conquer unaided; for she has the right to say with Medea: 'I, myself, am enough.'

Berlioz protested vigorously against Gluck's impious theory and Wagner's "crime" in making music the slave of speech. Music is the highest poetry and knows no master. It was for Berlioz, therefore, continually to increase the power of expression in pure music. And while Wagner, who was more moderate and a closer follower of tradition, sought to establish a compromise (perhaps an impossible one) between music and speech, and to create the new lyric drama, Berlioz, who was more revolutionary, achieved the dramatic symphony, of which the unequalled model today is still *Roméo et Juliette*.

The dramatic symphony naturally fell foul of all formal theories. Two arguments were set up against it: one derived from Bayreuth, and by now an act of faith; the other, current opinion, upheld by the crowd that speaks of music without understanding it.

The first argument, maintained by Wagner, is that music cannot really express action without the help of speech and gesture. It is in the name of this opinion that so many people condemn *a priori* Berlioz's *Roméo*. They think it childish to try and *translate* action into music. I suppose they think it less childish to *illustrate* an action by music. Do they think that gesture associates itself very happily with music? If only they would try to root up this great fiction, which has bothered us for the last three centuries; if only they would open their eyes and see — what great men like Rousseau and Tolstoy saw so clearly — the silliness of opera; if only they would see the anomalies of the Bayreuth show. In the second act of *Tristan* there is a celebrated passage, where Ysolde, burning with desire, is waiting for Tristan; she sees him come at last, and from afar she waves her scarf to the accompaniment of a phrase repeated several times by the orchestra. I cannot express the effect produced on me by that *imitation* (for it is nothing else) of a series of sounds by a series of gestures; I can never see it without indignation or without laughing. The curious thing is that when one hears this passage at a concert, one sees the gesture. At the theatre either one does not "see" it, or it appears childish. The natural action becomes stiff when clad in musical armour, and the absurdity of trying to make the two agree is forced upon one. In the music of *Rheingold* one pictures the stature and gait of the giants, and one sees the lightning gleam and the rainbow reflected on the clouds. In the theatre it is like a game of marionettes; and one feels the impassable gulf between music and gesture. Music is a world apart. When music wishes to depict the drama, it is not real action which is reflected in it,

it is the ideal action transfigured by the spirit, and perceptible only to the inner vision. The worst foolishness is to present two visions — one for the eyes and one for the spirit. Nearly always they kill each other.

The other argument urged against the symphony with a program is the pretended classical argument (it is not really classical at all). "Music," they say, "is not meant to express definite subjects; it is only fitted for vague ideas. The more indefinite it is, the greater its power, and the more it suggests." I ask, What is an indefinite art? What is a vague art? Do not the two words contradict each other? Can this strange combination exist at all? Can an artist write anything that he does not clearly conceive? Do people think he composes at random as his genius whispers to him? One must at least say this: A symphony of Beethoven's is a "definite" work down to its innermost folds; and Beethoven had, if not an exact knowledge, at least a clear intuition of what he was about. His last quartets are descriptive symphonies of his soul, and very differently carried out from Berlioz's symphonies. Wagner was able to analyse one of the former under the name of "A Day with Beethoven." Beethoven was always trying to translate into music the depths of his heart, the subtleties of his spirit, which are not to be explained clearly by words, but which are as definite as words — in fact, more definite; for a word, being an abstract thing, sums up many experiences and comprehends many different meanings. Music is a hundred times more expressive and exact than speech; and it is not only her right to express particular emotions and subjects, it is her duty. If that duty is not fulfilled, the result is not music — it is nothing at all.

Berlioz is thus the true inheritor of Beethoven's thought. The difference between a work like *Roméo* and one of Beethoven's symphonies is that the former, it would seem, endeavours to express objective emotions and subjects in music. I do not see why music should not follow poetry in getting away from introspection and trying to paint the drama of the universe. Shakspeare is as good as Dante. Besides, one may add, it is always Berlioz himself that is discovered in his music: it is his soul starving for love and mocked at by shadows which is revealed through all the scenes of *Roméo*.

I will not prolong a discussion where so many things must be left unsaid. But I would suggest that, once and for all, we get rid of these absurd endeavours to fence in art. Do not let us say: Music can . . . Music cannot express such-and-such a thing. Let us say rather, If genius pleases, everything is possible; and if music so wishes, she may be painting and poetry tomorrow. Berlioz has proved it well in his *Roméo*.

This *Roméo* is an extraordinary work: "a wonderful isle, where a temple of pure art is set up." For my part, not only do I consider it equal to the most powerful of Wagner's creations, but I believe it to be richer in its teaching and in its resources for art — resources and teaching which contemporary French art has not yet fully turned to account. One knows that

for several years the young French school has been making efforts to deliver our music from German models, to create a language of recitative that shall belong to France and that the *leitmotif* will not overwhelm; a more exact and less heavy language, which in expressing the freedom of modern thought will not have to seek the help of the classical or Wagnerian forms. Not long ago, the *Schola Cantorum* published a manifesto that proclaimed "the liberty of musical declamation . . . free speech in free music . . . the triumph of natural music with the free movement of speech and the plastic rhythm of the ancient dance" — thus declaring war on the metrical art of the last three centuries.

Well, here is that music; you will nowhere find a more perfect model. It is true that many who profess the principles of this music repudiate the model, and do not hide their disdain for Berlioz. That makes me doubt a little, I admit, the results of their efforts. If they do not feel the wonderful freedom of Berlioz's music, and do not see that it was the delicate veil of a very living spirit, then I think there will be more of archaism than real life in their pretensions to "free music." Study, not only the most celebrated pages of his work, such as the *Scène d'amour* (the one of all his compositions that Berlioz himself liked best), *La Tristesse de Roméo*, or *La Fête des Capulet* (where a spirit like Wagner's own unlooses and subdues again tempests of passion and joy), but take less well-known pages, such as the *Scherzetto chanté de la reine Mab*, or the *Réveil de Juliette*, and the music describing the death of the two lovers. In the one what light grace there is, in the other what vibrating passion, and in both of them what freedom and apt expression of ideas. The language is magnificent, of wonderful clearness and simplicity; not a word too much, and not a word that does not reveal an unerring pen. In nearly all the big works of Berlioz before 1845 (that is up to the *Damnation*) you will find this nervous precision and sweeping liberty.

Then there is the freedom of his rhythms. Schumann, who was nearest to Berlioz of all musicians of that time, and, therefore, best able to understand him, had been struck by this since the composition of the *Symphonic fantastique*. He wrote: —

"The present age has certainly not produced a work in which similar times and rhythms combined with dissimilar times and rhythms have been more freely used. The second part of a phrase rarely corresponds with the first, the reply to the question. This anomaly is characteristic of Berlioz, and is natural to his southern temperament."

Far from objecting to this, Schumann sees in it something necessary to musical evolution.

"Apparently music is showing a tendency to go back to its beginnings, to the time when the laws of rhythm did not yet trouble her; it seems that

she wishes to free herself, to regain an utterance that is unconstrained, and raise herself to the dignity of a sort of poetic language."

And Schumann quotes these words of Ernest Wagner: "He who shakes off the tyranny of time and delivers us from it will, as far as one can see, give back freedom to music."

Remark also Berlioz's freedom of melody. His musical phrases pulse and flow like life itself. "Some phrases taken separately," says Schumann, "have such an intensity that they will not bear harmonizing — *as in many ancient folk-songs* — and often even an accompaniment spoils their fullness." These melodies so correspond with the emotions, that they reproduce the least thrills of body and mind by their vigorous workings-up and delicate reliefs, by splendid barbarities of modulation and strong and glowing colour, by gentle gradations of light and shade or imperceptible ripples of thought, which flow over the body like a steady tide. It is an art of peculiar sensitiveness, more delicately expressive than that of Wagner; not satisfying itself with the modern tonality, but going back to old modes — a rebel, as M. Saint-Saëns remarks, to the polyphony which had governed music since Bach's day, and which is perhaps, after all, "a heresy destined to disappear."

How much finer, to my idea, are Berlioz's recitatives, with their long and winding rhythms, than Wagner's declamations, which — apart from the climax of a subject, where the air breaks into bold and vigorous phrases, whose influence elsewhere is often weak — limit themselves to the quasi-notation of spoken inflexions, and jar noisily against the fine harmonies of the orchestra. Berlioz's orchestration, too, is of a more delicate temper, and has a freer life than Wagner's, flowing in an impetuous stream, and sweeping away everything in its course; it is also less united and solid, but more flexible; its nature is undulating and varied, and the thousand imperceptible impulses of the spirit and of action are reflected there. It is a marvel of spontaneity and caprice.

In spite of appearances, Wagner is a classicist compared with Berlioz; he carried on and perfected the work of the German classicists; he made no innovations; he is the pinnacle and the close of one evolution of art. Berlioz began a new art; and one finds in it all the daring and gracious ardour of youth. The iron laws that bound the art of Wagner are not to be found in Berlioz's early works, which give one the illusion of perfect freedom.

As soon as the profound originality of Berlioz's music has been grasped, one understands why it encountered, and still encounters, so much secret hostility. How many accomplished musicians of distinction and learning, who pay honour to artistic tradition, are incapable of understanding Berlioz because they cannot bear the air of liberty breathed by his music. They are so used to thinking in German, that Berlioz's speech upsets and shocks

them. I can well believe it. It is the first time a French musician has dared to think in French; and that is the reason why I warned you of the danger of accepting too meekly German ideas about Berlioz. Men like Weingartner, Richard Strauss, and Mottl — thoroughbred musicians — are, without doubt, able to appreciate Berlioz's genius better and more quickly than we French musicians. But I rather mistrust the kind of appreciation they feel for a spirit so opposed to their own. It is for France and French people to learn to read his thoughts; they are intimately theirs, and one day will give them their salvation.

.

Berlioz's other great originality lay in his talent for music that was suited to the spirit of the common people, recently raised to sovereignty, and the young democracy. In spite of his aristocratic disdain, his soul was with the masses. M. Hippeau applies to him Taine's definition of a romantic artist: "the plebeian of a new race, richly gifted, and filled with aspirations, who, having attained for the first time the world's heights, noisily displays the ferment of his mind and heart." Berlioz grew up in the midst of revolutions and stories of Imperial achievement. He wrote his cantata for the *Prix de Rome* in July, 1830, "to the hard, dull noise of stray bullets, which whizzed above the roofs, and came to flatten themselves against the wall near his window." When he had finished his cantata, he went, "pistol in hand, to play the blackguard in Paris with the *sainte canaille*." He sang the *Marseillaise*, and made "all who had a voice and heart and blood in their veins" sing it too. On his journey to Italy he travelled from Marseilles to Livourne with Mazzinian conspirators, who were going to take part in the insurrection of Modena and Bologna. Whether he was conscious of it or not, he was the musician of revolutions; his sympathies were with the people. Not only did he fill his scenes in the theatre with swarming and riotous crowds, like those of the Roman Carnival in the second act of *Benvenuto* (anticipating by thirty years the crowds of *Die Meistersinger*), but he created a music of the masses and a colossal style.

His model here was Beethoven; Beethoven of the *Eroica*, of the C minor, of the A, and, above all, of the Ninth Symphony. He was Beethoven's follower in this as well as other things, and the apostle who carried on his work. And with his understanding of material effects and sonorous matter, he built edifices, as he says, that were "Babylonian and Ninevitic," "music after Michelangelo," "on an immense scale." It was the *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* for two orchestras and a choir, and the *Te Deum* for orchestra, organ, and three choirs, which Berlioz loved (whose finale *Judex crederis* seemed to him the most effective thing he had ever written), as well as the *Impériale*, for two orchestras and two choirs, and the famous *Requiem*, with its "four orchestras of brass instruments, placed round the main orchestra and the mass of voices, but separated and answering one

another at a distance." Like the *Requiem*, these compositions are often crude in style and of rather commonplace sentiment, but their grandeur is overwhelming. This is not due only to the hugeness of the means employed, but also to "the breadth of the style and to the formidable slowness of some of the progressions — whose final aim one cannot guess — which gives these compositions a strangely gigantic character." Berlioz has left in these compositions striking examples of the beauty that may reveal itself in a crude mass of music. Like the towering Alps, they move one by their very immensity. A German critic says: "In these Cyclopean works the composer lets the elemental and brute forces of sound and pure rhythm have their fling." It is scarcely music, it is the force of Nature herself. Berlioz himself calls his *Requiem* "a musical cataclysm."

These hurricanes are let loose in order to speak to the people, to stir and rouse the dull ocean of humanity. The *Requiem* is a Last Judgment, not meant, like that of the Sistine Chapel (which Berlioz did not care for at all) for great aristocracies, but for a crowd, a surging, excited, and rather savage crowd. The *Marche de Rakoczy* is less a Hungarian march than the music for a revolutionary fight; it sounds the charge; and Berlioz tells us it might bear Virgil's verses for a motto: —

. . . *Furor iraque mentes*
Præcipitant, pulchrumque mori succurrit in armis.

When Wagner heard the *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* he was forced to admit Berlioz's "skill in writing compositions that were popular in the best sense of the word."

"In listening to that symphony I had a lively impression that any little street boy in a blue blouse and red bonnet would understand it perfectly. I have no hesitation in giving precedence to that work over Berlioz's other works; it is big and noble from the first note to the last; a fine and eager patriotism rises from its first expression of compassion to the final glory of the apotheosis, and keeps it from any unwholesome exaggeration. I want gladly to express my conviction that that symphony will fire men's courage and will live as long as a nation bears the name of France."

How do such works come to be neglected by our Republic? How is it they have not a place in our public life? Why are they not part of our great ceremonies? That is what one would wonderingly ask oneself if one had not seen, for the last century, the indifference of the State to Art. What might not Berlioz have done if the means had been given him, or if his works had found a place in the fêtes of the Revolution? Unhappily, one must add that here again his character was the enemy of his genius. As this apostle of musical freedom, in the second part of his life, became afraid of himself and recoiled before the results of his own principles, and

returned to classicism, so this revolutionary fell to sullenly disparaging the people and revolutions; and he talks about "the republican cholera," "the dirty and stupid republic," "the republic of street-porters and rag-gatherers," "the filthy rabble of humanity a hundred times more stupid and animal in its twitchings and revolutionary grimacings than the baboons and orang-outangs of Borneo." What ingratitude! He owed to these revolutions, to these democratic storms, to these human tempests, the best of all his genius — and he disowned it all. This musician of a new era took refuge in the past.

Well, what did it matter? Whether he wished it or not, he opened out some magnificent roads for Art. He has shown the music of France the way in which her genius should tread; he has shown her possibilities she had never before dreamed of. He has given us a musical utterance at once truthful and expressive, free from foreign traditions, coming from the depths of our being, and reflecting our spirit; an utterance which responded to his imagination, to his instinct for what was picturesque, to his fleeting impressions, and his delicate shades of feeling. He has laid the strong foundation of a national and popular music for the greatest republic in Europe.

These are shining qualities. If Berlioz had had Wagner's reasoning power and had made the utmost use of his intuitions, if he had had Wagner's will and had shaped the inspirations of his genius and welded them into a solid whole, I venture to say that he would have made a revolution in music greater than Wagner's own; for Wagner, though stronger and more master of himself, was less original and, at bottom, but the close of a glorious past.

Will that revolution still be accomplished? Perhaps; but it has suffered half a century's delay. Berlioz bitterly calculated that people would begin to understand him about the year 1940.

After all, why be astonished that his mighty mission was too much for him? He was so alone. As people forsook him, his loneliness stood out in greater relief. He was alone in the age of Wagner, Liszt, Schumann, and Franck; alone, yet containing a whole world in himself, of which his enemies, his friends, his admirers, and he himself, were not quite conscious; alone, and tortured by his loneliness. Alone — the word is repeated by the music of his youth and his old age, by the *Symphonic fantastique* and *Les Troyens*. It is the word I read in the portrait before me as I write these lines — the beautiful portrait of the *Mémoires*, where his face looks out in sad and stern reproach on the age that so misunderstood him.

Index

Arnold, Matthew, on <i>Maurice de Guérin</i>	1179
Balzac, <i>Honoré de</i> , by Léon Gozlan	1086
Berlioz, <i>Hector</i> , by Romain Rolland	1378
Beyle, See Stendhal	
Birrell, Augustine, on <i>John Milton</i>	685
Bismarck, <i>Prince Otto von</i> , by Emil Ludwig	1371
Bolingbroke, <i>Henry St. John, Lord</i> , by Oliver Goldsmith	1031
Bonaparte, <i>Napoleon</i> , by Georg Brandes	1063
Bradford, Gamaliel, on <i>James McNeill Whistler</i>	1356
Brandes, Georg, on <i>Napoleon Bonaparte</i>	1063
Burns, <i>Robert</i> , by Thomas Carlyle	803
Burroughs, John, on <i>Walt Whitman</i>	1329
Carlyle, Thomas, on <i>Robert Burns</i>	803
Corday, <i>Charlotte</i> , by Jules Michelet	1000
Cunningham, Allan, on <i>Thomas Gainsborough</i>	787
Deburau, <i>Jean-Gaspard</i> , by Jules Janin	1139
De Quincey, Thomas, on <i>William Wordsworth</i>	1200
De Quincey (with Wasianski), on <i>Immanuel Kant</i>	943
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, on <i>Henry David Thoreau</i>	1315
Figuier, Louis, on <i>Sir Isaac Newton</i>	704
Frederic the Great, by Thomas Babington Macaulay	886
Gainsborough, <i>Thomas</i> , by Allan Cunningham	787
Gosse, Sir Edmund, on <i>Robert Louis Stevenson</i>	1300
Gozlan, Léon, on <i>Honoré de Balzac</i>	1086
<i>Guérin, Maurice de</i> , by Matthew Arnold	1179
Janin, Jules, on <i>Jean-Gaspard Deburau</i>	1139
Johnson, Samuel, on <i>Alexander Pope</i>	731
Kant, <i>Immanuel</i> , by J. C. Wasianski and Thomas De Quincey	943
<i>Louis XIV</i> , by the Duc de Saint-Simon	632
Lucas, Jean Maximilien, on <i>Baruch de Spinoza</i>	716
Ludwig, Emil, on <i>Prince Otto von Bismarck</i>	1371
Macaulay, Thomas Babington, on <i>Frederic the Great</i>	886
Michelet, Jules, on <i>Charlotte Corday</i>	1000
<i>Milton, John</i> , by Augustine Birrell	685
<i>Molière, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin</i> , by Voltaire	624
Motley, John Lothrop, on <i>Peter the Great</i>	846
Mozart, <i>Johann Wolfgang Amadeus</i> , by Henri Beyle Stendhal	978
<i>Napoleon Bonaparte</i> , by Georg Brandes	1063
<i>Newton, Sir Isaac</i> , by Louis Figuier	704

- Peacock, Thomas Love, on *Percy Bysshe Shelley* 1251
Peter the Great, by John Lothrop Motley 846
Pope, Alexander, by Samuel Johnson 731
 Poquelin, See Molière

Rambouillet, Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise de, by G. Tallement des Réaux 614
 Réaux, See Tallement des
 Rolland, Romain, on *Hector Berlioz* 1378
 Rouvroy, See Saint-Simon

 Saint-Simon, Duc de, on *Louis XIV* 632
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, by Thomas Love Peacock 1251
Spinoza, Baruch de, by Jean Maximilien Lucas 716
 Stendhal, Henri Beyle, on *Johann Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* 978
Stevenson, Robert Louis, by Sir Edmund Gosse 1300
Swift, Jonathan, by William Makepeace Thackeray 1014

 Tallement des Réaux, Gédéon, on the *Marquise de Rambouillet* 614
 Thackeray, William Makepeace, on *Jonathan Swift* 1014
Thoreau, Henry David, by Ralph Waldo Emerson 1315

 Vivonne, See Rambouillet
 Voltaire, Françoise Arouet, on *Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière* 624

 Wasianski, J. C. (with De Quincey), on *Immanuel Kant* 943
Whistler, James McNeill, by Gamaliel Bradford 1356
Whitman, Walt, by John Burroughs 1329
Wordsworth, William, by Thomas De Quincey 1200

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



138 962

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY